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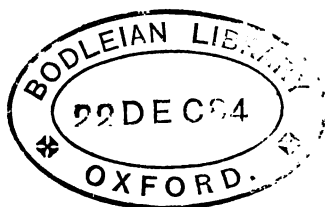




POEMS
LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC.

POEMS
LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC.

BY
EVELYN DOUGLAS.



LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.
1884.

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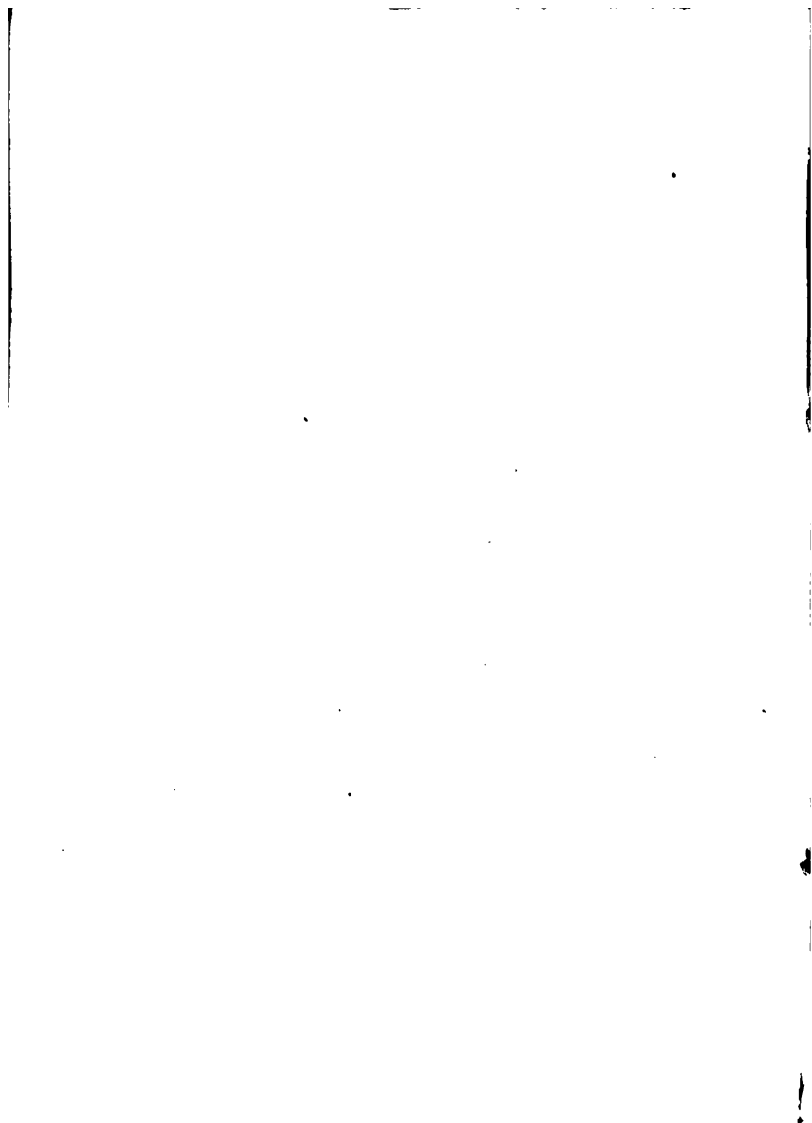
280. f. 117.

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TO MY FRIEND

E. M. R.

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

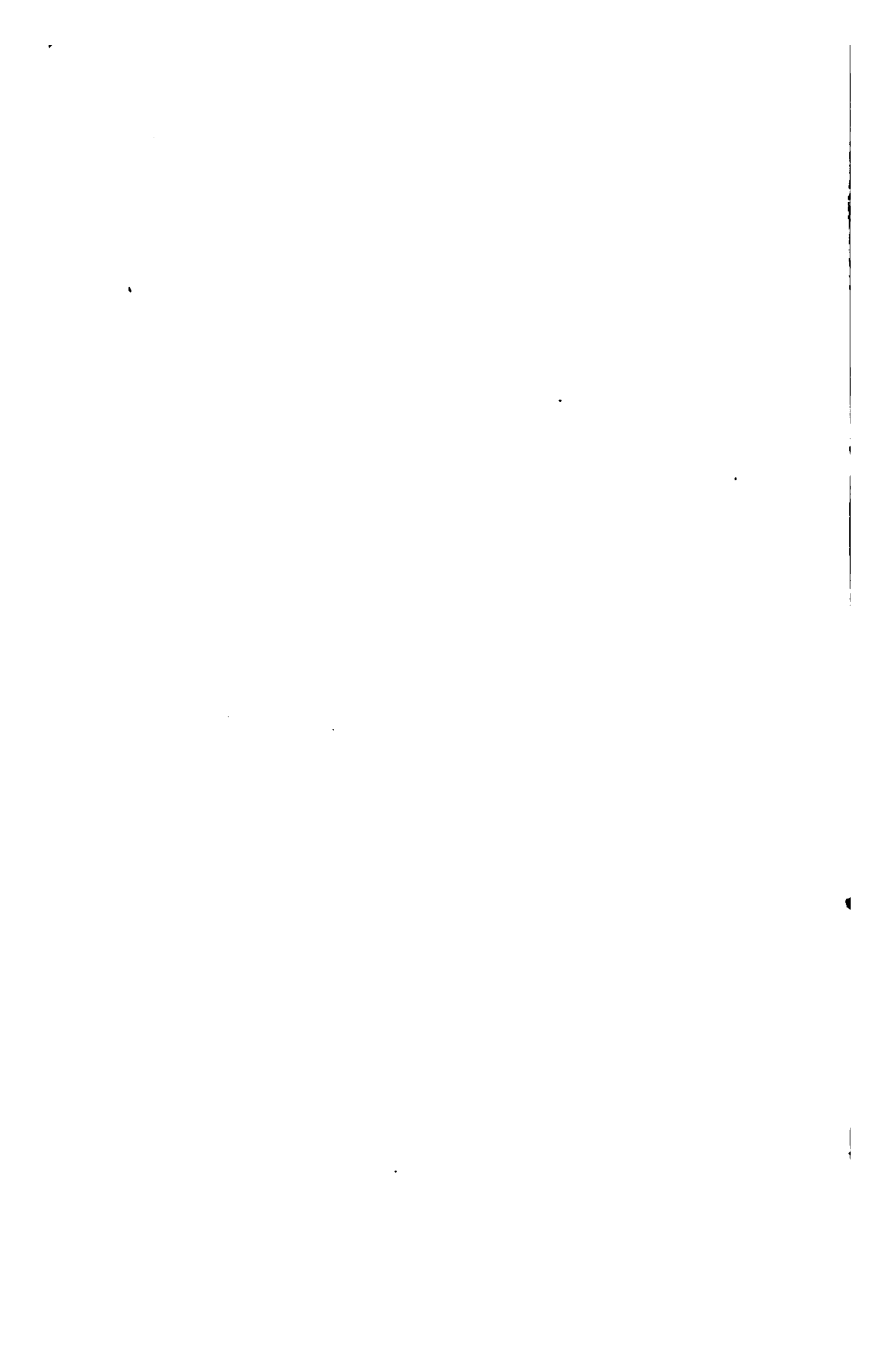


P R E F A C E.

THIS volume, which was originally intended for publication in the early part of the spring of this year, contains only two short pieces of a date later than December 1883. On the other hand, two at least of the earliest pieces date back as far as the early part of 1877, and some others belong to 1878 and 1879. Where all is immature, it is hardly necessary to say that these are wholly juvenile. But in launching a first volume of early efforts I preferred to include a few of these February flowers, partly out of affectionate regret for the boyish days when they were written, and partly because I cannot help suspecting with a fitting sense of humiliation that at least two of them contain fewer blemishes than their companions.

I have not scrupled to paraphrase and transcribe portions here and there of the classics into the unworthy setting of my own verse, holding the classics to be, as Fielding says, a common-land upon which it is lawful for every man to fatten his own Muse.

September 15, 1884.



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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting department in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements.

2. It then outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups, and how these methods are used to identify trends and patterns in the data.

3. The next section describes the results of the study, highlighting the key findings and the implications for practice. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research.

4. Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.

POEMS.



EUCHARISTIA MYSTICA.



THOU perishing for scorn
To utter thy despair,
Come, tell it, poet born,
Unto my silver air.
My star-eyes, wet and wild,
Swim with a blinded sight :
I am thy mother, child,
I, the Night.

Mother mine, only one,
A wanderer from the womb,
I pray thee take thy son
Into thy golden gloom.
Here wastes my soul in thrall
To griefs and doubts and fears :

Hast thou no place in all
These, thy spheres ?

Ah poet, eagle-soul,
Soar to thy lawful place
Beyond Orion's goal,
And kiss me on my face.
Set on my lips thy lips,
And on my spangled hair,
My breast with thine eclipse :
Have thy prayer !

Mother mine, Comforter,
Spirit most high and pure,
Deep heavens are all astir
With thy most starry lure :
A mind, a mystery,
Exiled and orphaned quite,
I pine, I die for thee,
Mother Night.

Child, be of better cheer :
I lure thee not from far.
Lo, I am even near ;
I fold thee like a star !

Mine arms embrace thy head,
My beams thy spirit reach,
My voice and thy voice wed,
Light and speech.

Mother, I loved of old
A woman great and fair,
Serene and high and cold
As thy serenest air.
A world, a wilderness
Divides us heart from heart,
Poet and poetess
Most apart.

Child, what dost thou with love
For mortal clay defiled?
We, are we not enough?
Thine own, thy kindred, child.—
Lo the Sea, soft and warm,
Reposes by thy side,
All thine in calm and storm,
Son, thy bride!

Mother, thy fair limbs swoon
Within the misty robe;

Upon thy brow the moon
Pales her broad opal globe.
Mother, I droop, I faint ;
Thy voices ebb away.—
Cursed be thy cold restraint,
Thou vile clay !

Over white mountain peaks
I pass with waning wings,
My path the moonlight streaks,
The meteor-girdle rings ;
A cirque of starry flames,
I fade from common sight ;
The Universe reclaims
Me, the Night.

Sea, wooed in many a song,
Reach me thy spirit-hand ;
Now slips thy foam along
The quiet golden sand,
Hissing about my feet,
Melodious murmuring brine,
Foaming with love, O sweet
Bride of mine !

Enter my bosom's wan
 Fluid green flame of waves,
Play with the weeds upon
 My sweet concealéd caves ;
My rippling moonlight hairs
 Weave over and over thee ;
I too, I grant, thy prayers,
 I, the Sea.

I lay my hand upon
 Thy panting naked side,
I clasp thy billows wan,
 And paddle with thy tide ;
I faint upon thy lips
 And catch thy fresh sweet breath,
From limbs thy gold veil slips,
 Pale as Death.

Poet, I warm, I glow
 Through all my sickening flood ;
I faint, I melt, I flow,
 I throb throughout thy blood ;
I circle round thy brow,
 And o'er thy bosom run ;

Not twain be I and thou,
Nay, but one.

Maiden, divinest maid,
Infinite, silent, deep,
Under thy lashes' shade
Thine eyes, thine eyes, asleep,
Thy voice, thy voice more vast,
More soft than sounds which fall .
From trump and organ blast—
Yea, than all.

Poet, divinest face,
Lo, at thy feet I cast
The treasure I embrace
Within my caverns vast,
Shells fairer than the gems
On maiden breasts that shine
Or in queen's diadems,
Poet mine.

I lift them to my lips
And kiss thy dripping weeds,
Until my mouth too drips
And my heart burns and bleeds.

Cease with thy sighs to vex :
Dead let the dead past be :
Bury me with thy wrecks,
Thou deep Sea.

From these fair golden sands
I fade with ebbing tide
To wash remoter lands,
A weeping widowed bride ;
I go, I cannot stay,
Under the cold moon's spell,
Into the depths away.
Love, farewell !

High mountains, brethren dear,
I swim, a dazzled star,
In blue depths opening near
And widening out afar ;
I mix in the faint streaks
Where with the morn's blue blaze
Your pinnacles and peaks
Melt in haze.

Brother sweet, desolate,
Our granite arms we ope ;

Our feet are firm as Fate,
Our head as high as Hope:
We clasp thee to our breast,
We lock thee up in us,
From fear, from doubt at rest,
Guarded thus.

Your crevices and cracks,
Your purple-paved ravines
Lead me on tear-dimmed tracks
To misty golden scenes ;
Your gusty gorges worn
By labyrinthine streams
Fade like sweet Sleep at morn
With her dreams.

More than for other men
For thee we wear these hues ;
We open to thy ken
Our most mysterious views ;
We converse, soul with soul,
In earthquake tones that rend
And thunder-peals that roll,
Poet friend.

· Your avalanches crash,
 And foam your white cascades;
Your pine-trees groan and clash
 Among tempestuous glades;
Your pitch-black tarns arise
 And shake their snowy wave;—
What am I in your eyes?—
 I, a slave.

Slave!—A free soul thou art,
 Free as the blast that plays
Among our rifts apart
 And treads our highest ways.
Scorn cannot quell nor tame
 That thou beliest so,
The deep the hidden flame
 'Neath the snow.

Speak again! bid me strive;
 Utter some thunder-word
To save my soul alive,
 Never forgot once heard!
Ah! the clouds cover you,
 The valley-mists arise;

You melt, you fade from view,
And hope dies.

We melt, we fade ; the storms
Rise up, and like a veil
Deep clouds enwrap our forms ;
Our granite voices fail
Still, still the rivers shine :
Their flying feet pursue,
Our sisters dear, and thine—
Friend, adieu !

Pale River, sister sweet,
That through the rising storm
Hurriest with glimmering feet
And verdant-vestured form,
Thy forehead crowned with reed,
The lotus on thy breast ;
Take me in this my need
To thy rest.

Dear brother, thou a child
My playmate wast of old ;
Thy pure limbs undefiled
Played with my ripples cold ;

My flag and lotus dank
Thy dripping hair would twine,
Sleeping on my green bank,
Brother mine !

Sister, man's heart and soul
Lie dead in golden chains :
In vain on stagnant shoal
Heaven pours her passionate strains.
Who sings to loveless slaves,
Deaf ears and spirits numb ?
Ah ! teach me, like thy waves,
To be dumb.

Silent I move along
Polluted haunts of man ;
I stifle my sweet song,
Gliding from span to span :
But in the solitude
Of moor and mountain-peak,
Far from the multitude,
I can speak.

I too, I too would leave
The life of men on earth,

And to my kindred cleave,
My kin of soul and birth.
Not of mankind am I,
And yet not all thine own—
A double sympathy,
Twice alone.

Nay, not alone with me :
Clothed as thou art in clay,
Straight to thy soul I see
Through sin and pain my way.
I too must mix with mire
My living liquid dew,
Till time and long desire
Cleanse me through.

Immortal Effluence
That drinkest deep of life,
How canst thou know the sense
Of ever-baffled strife?
Earth's bonds and mortal breath,
Sorrow, and sin, and pain,
Lie like the gulf of Death
'Twixt us twain.

Poet, my lips are sealed
Upon this mystery :
Yet hope thou, and be healed,
Orphan of Destiny.
Though God, though man forsake,
Though I too seek my goal,
Build where no whirlwinds shake—
On thy soul.

Night, Ocean, Mountain, Stream,
Ye pass away so swift
I grope as in a dream
'Mid shapes that fade and shift.
All, all abandon me :
All leave me desolate :
Ah ! then I turn to ye,
Death and Fate !



HYMN TO EROS.



Eros, from rest in isles far-famed
With rising Anthesterion rose,
And all Hellenic heights acclaimed
Eros,

—SWINBURNE.

WITH voices high and sound of harp,
With bended brow and bended knee,
And agonising sighs more sharp
Than all the sighs of all the sea,
Bringing the grape-bunch and the peach,
Bringing the olive and the corn,
And apples blooming out of reach,
From tossing bough by tempest torn,
Bringing the lily and the rose,
We sing to thee, Eros ! Eros !

With armfuls of the golden sheaves
We come before thee and adore,

With scattering of laurel leaves
And myrtle in a twinkling store ;
With roses red we wreath our brows,
And press red poppies on our lips,
And pour red wine with whispered vows,
And ooze with honeyed finger-tips,
In honour of thy fruitful snows,
And suns, and showers, Eros ! Eros !

We bring thee torches sputtering flame
Fashioned of boughs of resinous pine,
Dipped in the bitter blood of shame
From maiden hearts and sorrow's brine ;
We bring thee supple bows and strong
Of ram's-horn linked with silver joints,
Gold-cued and strung with golden thong,
And arrows tipped with agate points ;
We bring thee serpents for thy foes,
Adders and asps, Eros ! Eros !

With dancing and the shriek of flutes,
Of pipes and flutes, we come to thee,
And with the softer sound of lutes
And every kind of minstrelsy,
Leading along the lowing herds
That ramp with thine awakened stings,
*

All cooing doves and singing birds,
All life that walks or flies with wings ;
Of all the gifts thy power bestows
A tithe to thee, Eros ! Eros !

We bring the pards of Bacchus' team
Festooned with ivy and with wine ;
Our hair reeks with the wine-vat's steam,
Our mouths drip with the lees of wine ;
We stagger with uncertain foot,
We reel about thy shadowy glades,
Chewing the bay and opiate root,
Sleeping below the Upas shades ;
Thee too we call with loud Evoes !
To thee we quaff, Eros ! Eros !

The Fauns with nether limbs like goats,
The Satyrs bushed with shaggy breast,
The Mænads with back-bended throats,
And Bacchus, sovereign of the rest,
The Bassarids with bosoms soft,
Silenus on his wine-skin throne,
All waving with loud screams aloft
The Thyrsus topped with pine-tree cone,
Lead us to thee : the grape's blood glows
To warm the breast with thee, Eros !

Earth steams and smokes with noon-tide heat,
And ocean pants with basking wave :
Red fires of summer burn and beat
Through leafy arch and architrave ;
Exhausting drought lays waste the plain
And yellows every growing thing ;
Heaven palpitates with burning pain ;
The rain is dried up at the spring ;
By thee compelled, the panting does
Flock to the water-brooks, Eros !

By thee compelled, they quit the brink,
And wet their hoofs in stream and lake ;
Thine, thine the voice that bids them drink,
Thine the strong thirst they seek to slake ;
Thy goad sends forth the herd to browse
Upon the life-sustaining blade ;
With thee their swooning senses drowse
In bosky nook of forest glade :
All sweet desire from thee outflows,
Hunger, and thirst, and swoon, Eros !

By thy device the virgin field
Falls pregnant by the scattered grain ;

By thy device the furrows yield
 A tenfold plenty back again,
And all the hill-sides bend and surge
 With shadowy golden waves of wealth,
And winds from Heaven's every verge
 Feed the unopened hulls with health :
In trust to thee man plants and sows,
And thy creative force, Eros !

And every art which man creates
 To multiply earth's bounteous stores
From thy sweet influence emanates
 And quickens with thy quickening spores ;
From thee first flew the inspiring shaft
 That stings to birth the fertile brain ;
Thy work the fruit-tree, thine the graft,
 And thine the marriage of the twain ;
Man joins but cannot wed, and owes
Their bridal-kiss to thee, Eros !

For barren else the vine would be,
 And sweep the ground with trailing boughs,
Hadst thou not made the strong elm-tree
 To shelter and support his spouse :

No pulpy figs the trees would load,
The date-palm shed no harvest shower,
Did not the gall-fly feel thy goad,
And so put forth his fruitful power ;
And many a maiden flower that grows
Wild birds infuse with thee, Eros !

Thou makest all the sea to teem
With crawling shape and glancing fin,
And populous winds to smoke and steam
With swarms that raise a murmurous din ;
Thou makest wintry trees to bloom
And burgeon in the clear spring air ;
Thou raisest out of mouldering tomb
In purple flowers the life laid there :
Of Death and Birth the marriage shows
Thy power supreme, Eros ! Eros !

For thee the wild horse shakes his mane
And snuffs the wind with back-laid ears,
Or over swelling waves of plain,
Spying the mares afar, careers ;
For thee the lion roars all night,
The wolf about the sheepfold prowls ;

For thee fierce stags join jealous fight,
And to the moon the wild dog howls ;
For thee and thine the squirrel stows
His winter hoard, Eros ! Eros !

For thee the Orient's wonder bears
His gorgeous plumage starred with eyes ;
For thee the luring blossom wears
Its velvet coat and violet dyes ;
For thee amid the coppice throbs
The piping of the feathered throng ;
For thee the inspired poet sobs
His praise and passion into song ;
All Nature chants, and pipes, and lows,
For thee, for thee, Eros ! Eros !

Across high peaks red tempests pant,
And gusty torrents storm and sweep ;
By rift, and ridge, athwart, aslant,
Where moonbeams in mute hollows sleep,
The surf seethes upward to the shore
And whispers through the shifting shells,
And far at sea white surges roar
Round islands where the cormorant dwells,

And fresh along the wet waste blows
Thy briny breath, Eros ! Eros !

In showers like drifting snow it shakes
The apple-bloom that promised fruit ;
It blows the roses into flakes
And sifts them round the rose-tree root ;
It sports among the clammy leaves
Where ringdoves brood and build and pair ;
In labyrinths of gold it weaves
The ravelled threads of Phædra's hair,
And o'er her face the tangle strows
Wet with sad dreams of thee, Eros !

She pants, she wanders in her speech,
And raves of fields and quiet brooks,
And sands the winds of ocean bleach,
And blue waves lapped in rocky nooks,
And fountains cradled in green grass
Or bubbling up through sands of gold,
Cool waters twinkling in the brass
And marble slabs that drip with cold,
And keener ice than ever froze
Blood burning with thy blaze, Eros !

“ Ah ! would that I were free ! ” she cries,
“ A white wing of the flying flocks,
To bathe in sunset-coloured skies
And hover round the foam-ringed rocks,
To skim the tops of forest pines
And revel over weltering waves,
To hide where daylight never shines,
In deep recess of frozen caves,
To purge me of thy cruel woes,
Crime-loving, tyrant-god, Eros ! ”

And Hæmon o'er the living grave
That holds his love pours forth in blood
To thee the soul thy blessing gave ;
And by the crag-bound swart sea-flood
That washes Æthiopia
Bright Perseus quells the fiery pest
And looses chained Andromeda,
And crowns with her his dangerous quest,
The end of toil, the journey's close,
A gift of thine, Eros ! Eros !

And Theseus with thy silken clue
Threads the intricate Cretan maze,

And slays the beast that gored and slew
Fair youths brought far o'er watery ways ;
And Jason plucks his brand from sheath,
Reliant on thy charms to tame
The offspring of the dragon's teeth
And yoke the oxen breathing flame :
He cleaves a way through mailèd rows,
Nor feels the fire for thee, Eros !

And river-gods with maidens link
Who tarry talking with the stars ;
In sirens' arms o'erpowered sink
Wrecked souls cast up on reefs and bars ;
Zeus falls in rain through brazen tower,
His Danaë's white breast upon ;
And Dian in a moonbeam shower
Descends to sweet Endymion :
The gods, the gods too feel thy throes,
And bow to thee, Eros ! Eros !

Olympian bosoms inly bleed
For hate of earth-born rivalry,
The ravished joys of Ganymede,
The pregnant womb of Semele ;

And Leda wedded with a swan,
Europa with a monster shy,
And hornèd Io goaded on
From land to land by stinging fly,
Whom Argus watches, as she goes,
With eyes less blind than thine, Eros !

And lo ! to Freedom closely sealed
Thou walkest crowned in later days !
Shoulder to shoulder, shield to shield,
Fair comrades feel your double blaze :
The city of the violet crown
At tyrant's word no more shall blanch :
Lo ! life for equal laws laid down,
The sword wreathed in the myrtle-branch !
The proud breast bleeds with many blows
That violence planned to thee, Eros !

And Wisdom too, divinest maid,
Bides at thy feet for wings and fire ;
By thee alone and thy sweet aid
She mounts on plumes that never tire ;
And he, the old, the Attic sage,
Walks with thy glory unreprieved,

And steeps with thee his glowing page,
Nor blushes to confess he loved ;
For he that loves and he that knows
Are made as one in thee, Eros !

Thou breakest through the sleep, the sloth,
Thou touchest with thy fire the tongue,
And toils the arm to labour loth
By thy divine contrition stung ;
And sings the dull of brain and heart
Once in his life a poet's note ;
The coward lays his fears apart
To smite as heroes never smote.
Praised be thine arrows and thy bows,
That make weak men as gods, Eros !

Bereft of thee, how dumb the voice !
How stateliest music faints and fails !
The flute refuses to rejoice,
The pipe withholds her plaintive wails ;
The Phrygian note awakes no throb,
The Doric march no silent rage ;
Desire forgets to swoon and sob
In Lydia's vocal vassalage ;

In more than marble's mute repose
The statue waits thy touch, Eros !

Thou slayest and thou makest whole,
Thou castest down and settest high,
A smiling god with starry stole,
A Fury wreathed with serpentry.
In one thy barb a poison breeds,
In one lights up dead Virtue's flame ;
But every breast with thee that bleeds
Knows thee the cause, the one, the same,
And on thy mighty shoulder throws
His glory or his shame, Eros !

And so with voice and sound of harp,
With bended brow and bended knee,
And agonising sighs more sharp
Than all the sighs of all the sea,
Bringing the grape-bunch and the peach,
Bringing the olive and the corn,
And apples blooming out of reach,
From tossing bough by tempest torn,
We bless, we curse the hour when rose
Thy sea-born Source, Eros ! Eros !

H O P E S.



I.

SHALL I meet thee o'er the starry shore
 In the gardens of eternity?
Shall I drink of thine eyes in Paradise
 A seraph by the jasper sea?
Thou art fled away, my dream of day,
 Upon the ebbing airs of love,
A shadow drawn into the dawn
 Of the reality above.
The sobbing waves which moonlight laves
 And music fills with silver chimes,
The golden streaks on mountain-peaks
 Bring back thy face to me at times :
But thou art gone, the fairest one,
 The only soul God gave to me :
The link is riven 'twixt me and Heaven,
 The light gone from my destiny.

II.

Shall thy love entwine up there with mine
Or bloom, as on this earth, apart,
While I still weep each night to sleep
The loneliness within my heart?
Still wounded rove from the kindred drove
And nurse my arrow 'neath the shade,
Or woo long calm in the odorous balm
Of the Upas boughs and the sweet nightshade?
Still loose alone that spirit's zone
Who visits but the desolate,
And finds for them in leaf and stem
Companions mute to glad their fate :
Still faint and swoon as 'neath the moon
My soul has swooned with dreams of light,
Bathing its wings in the hidden springs
And hidden echoes of delight?

III.

Or shall thy smile, with its starry guile
And its ghostly haunting sweet reproach,
Become more truth than the love of youth
And the thoughts that breathe of its approach?

Shall the moon's red globe in its opal robe
And the glow-worm light of the morning star,
And the emerald gleam of the broken stream
And water-lily's floating car,
And the waves that sob and pulse and throb
In crevices of granite creeks,
And the harebell blue with its chalice of dew,
Where the hunted moth a refuge seeks,
With all most fair in earth and air,
And all I ever loved or dreamed,
Melt into the light of the infinite
And be the truth thy beauty seemed?



DESPAIR.



THE light is fled, the light is fled,
The daystar in the east is dead :
The cup of gold is in thy hold,
But all the glittering wine is shed.

The sun is fled, the sun is fled ;
The twilight skies are burning red :
The after-glow is fierce and slow,
But all the flames of love are sped.



THE GOLDEN CITY.

I DREAMED once of a city
Of marble and of gold,
Where pity melts to pity
And love for love is sold,
Where hot light smokes and shivers
Round endless sweeps of rivers,
A home of high endeavours
For the stately men of old.

O'er it no cloud's umbration,
No stain of tempest hue,
But throbbing and pulsation
Of endless depths of blue :
No fume nor vapour hoary,
Only a mist of glory
Inveiled it like a story
Of the beautiful and true.

All round were cattle browsing
On grassy slope and bank,
And bronzed youths carousing
With maids of snowy flank :
Or down in cool green places
They wrestled with grim faces
To the Muses and the Graces,
To the gods that loved and drank.

In the broad and breezy highlands
Lay blue lakes mountain-bound,
And, blossoming with islands,
The deep sea circled round,
Kissing the long thin reaches
Of the silvery shell-strewn beaches,
Which the sunny salt wind bleaches
And the white waves fill with sound.

There the hill-side smiles and glistens
With the olive and the vine,
And the dim and purple distance
Kisses the purpler brine,
And the gold corn bends and surges
By the fruitful vales and verges,

Where the rivulet emerges
And the flowers begin to shine.

Far along the green sea's edges
The gold hills bask and burn,
With their shelving saffron ledges
And vales of moss and fern,
And the sun sinks on the pillows
Of their gilded cloud-like billows
When the mountain's bosom yellows
And the twilight fires return.

And the moon at night comes scaling
The spire-like westward peaks,
Her pale blue raiment trailing
Over the hills and creeks :
From her lap the stars like flowers
She flings in sea-green showers,
And across the icy towers
She walks with silver streaks.

And the temple's fluted column
Rears its pediment on high,
Where the gods, serene and solemn,
Gaze on the passer-by,

And the beauty of their faces
Lights the city's quiet places,
And their ample love embraces
All the earth and sea and sky.

And under tower and temple,
By minarets and domes,
With burning waves a-tremble
The stately river foams,
Lapping the granite arches
Of the bridges, while it marches
Through rows of limes and larches,
By many hearths and homes.

By buttresses and basements
And pillared colonnade,
By open doors and casements
In festal wreaths arrayed,
By stair and terrace wending,
In windings without ending,
Sunlight or moonlight blending
With massy squares of shade.

By gardens full of fountains
And statues white as snow,

Nymphs of the seas and mountains,
And goddesses a-row,
Where the deep heart of the roses
Its secret sweet uncloses,
And the scent, like heat, reposes
On the beds that bask and glow.

By palaces of pleasure
With spires and vanes a-glare,
Where many a sculptured treasure
Lies bathed in smiles, and where
Sound's ebbing waves go fainting
Through galleries of painting,
No angry colour tainting
Their halls of rosy air.

And the silken-sailed galleys
Keep soaring up and down
Through the long and leafy alleys
Of the river-threaded town ;
And they moor their gilded barges
By the flecked and flowery marges,
Where the river-bed enlarges
To the seaside and the sun.

They be happy men that dwell there
In that serene abode ;
They have no heaven nor hell there,
Nor fear of fiend or god ;
Each by his soul's light steering,
Not resting, neither veering,
Nor coveting nor fearing
The recompense or rod.

Though seasons shift and alter,
No change their weather mars,
But the struggling sunbeams falter
Through the cloud-rack's golden bars ;
And when clouds are rent asunder
The moon smiles blandly under,
Mixing the light of thunder
With the icy light of stars.

There gorgeous Plato's spirit
Hangs brooding like a dove,
And all men born inherit
Love free as gods above ;
There each one is to other
A sister or a brother,

A father or a mother,
A lover or a love.

And the maids amid the shadows
At eve come forth to play,
And along the moonlight meadows
The manly lovers stray,
And the woodland chirps and hisses
With the laughter and the kisses,
And their fiery long-drawn blisses
Scarce spare the blush of day.

And they bathe amid the shallows
Of the rain-pools in the glade,
Where the fane of Eros hallows
The broad and spreading shade ;
And they gambol free and tameless,
In their naked beauty shameless,
In a land where all is blameless,
Hand in hand, sweet youth and maid.

For with them no strife of ages,
No war of old and young,
But the poets and the sages
Give forth one fiery tongue ;

And when some young Apollo
Awakes the shell's mute hollow,
The old men weeping follow
For the days when they too sung.

And the seer's words take measure,
And thought is music-shod,
And the young man sings of pleasure
With the wisdom of a god,
And the old man's mystic dreaming
Is of faith beyond the seeming,
Of the shifting ocean teeming
With the isles where Truth has trod.

Of the dim-eyed captives fettered
In the cave of spectral night,
And the rays on darkness scattered
By the sun of truth and light,
Of the Love that leads us higher,
And nigher still and nigher
To the fount of light and fire,
To the source of Good and Right.

And they feast in many an arbour
Of the passion-flower and vine,

In a cool sweet shady harbour
From the broad and bright sunshine,
And each glowing maiden cowers
By the youth her love devours,
And they spread the fruit and flowers,
And they draw the beamy wine.

And they add sweet woodland berries
To their meal of milk and cheese,
And ripe figs and cornel cherries
From the overladen trees,
With their oaten bread and wheaten
In the new mulse steeped and eaten,
And the oil-cakes which they sweeten
With fresh honey from the bees.

And the poet in the pauses
Of the laughter and the love
Sings the honey-worded clauses
Of the lofty Lesbian dove ;
And amid the harp's wild clangour,
Free of jealousy and anger,
All may look with fiery languor
In the eyes they famish of.

And the spray of myrtle chases
The bowl around the board,
And they chant with glowing faces,
And they smite the thrilling chord
To the love of youth and woman,
To the goddess of the true man,
To the Freedom of all human,
And her champion the sword.

For once they had a tyrant,
Who ate, and slept, and drank,
And abased each high aspirant
To the slaves who cringed and shrank :
But the youth arose and sought him,
In the market-place they caught him,
To the water-side they brought him,
And they nailed him to a plank.

And now in ease and quiet,
In melody and play,
And passion's amorous riot
They pass sweet hours away :
The battle of the sexes
Alone their spirit vexes :

Nor war nor wealth perplexes
The Elysium of their day.

But when foeman's foot impinges
On the pasture of their flocks,
They don their purple fringes
And they comb their golden locks,
And the maids, with tightened kirtle
And foreheads bound with myrtle,
Stalk where the death-shafts hurtle,
And drive them to the rocks.

Not half of heart and listless,
As men with loves less free,
But headlong and resistless
As the lightnings and the sea ;
For in face of all the chances
Of the whirling blades and lances,
Amid love's approving glances
Weak men as gods would be.

Strong-sinewed as the lion,
Fleet-footed as the deer,
The sire beside the scion,
The maid her mother near,

*

All good or evil calling
Alike each thing befalling,
One family appalling,
One heart that knows not fear.

Nor, when their banners vanquish
And triumph wreathes their arms,
In joyless sloth they languish,
Once free of foes' alarm,
But, ne'er till darkness steeping
The soul in love or sleeping,
In running, wrestling, leaping,
All freely bare their charms.

Their spirits frank and truthful,
No spite, no lusts defile,
And the grey chide not the youthful,
And the youth forbear to smile
At the old man's wheezy coughing
And the crone her vesture doffing,
At the evil only scoffing,
That only deeming vile.

For the base is food for laughter,
And the evil only base,

And if virtue lead, thereafter
Can follow no disgrace :
Not in the raiment's measure
Dwells Temperance the treasure,
But in him whom pain nor pleasure,
Can move not from his place.

Some scour o'er measured courses
With oiled and naked limbs,
One tames unbroken horses,
And one the torrent swims ;
Or they try their fleet mares' paces
For the steed and chariot races,
Straining the tightened traces
Bound to the brazen rims.

How sweet the cool limbs sunning
Under the elms to lie,
Or 'neath the olives running
In the fair Academy,
Crowned with white yew or rushes
And poplar leaf that brushes
The brow no passion flushes,
To let sweet hours go by !

They hurl the spear together
And cast the disc with might,
Or case their arms in leather
And join in Pollux' fight ;
With blunted blades they bicker
On osier shields and wicker :
Their hearts beat thick and thicker
With conflict's high delight.

And now behold advancing,
Brought forth from field and stall,
Great chargers proudly prancing,
By nimble youths and tall ;
With eager looks they stroke them,
Who bred them, fed them, broke them,
And to the cars they yoke them,
Obedient to their call.

The rounded lists lie ready,
Fenced in and strawn with bark,
The steeds stand close and steady,
Straining to cross the mark,
With arched necks forward bended
And nostrils wide distended,

Great-flanked, and strong, and splendid,
And for the signal hark.

Now from the barriers bursting
They give them to the course,
Like men for glory thirsting,
In fiery fearless force ;
And each youth with back-blown tresses
And form that forward presses
With lashes and caresses
Hangs o'er his flying horse.

Ah ! who of gods shall hinder
Their thunder-swift career ?
Well sang the glorious Pindar,
And Horace, less severe,
Of the wheels the hot goal grazing,
And the crown of all men's praising,
E'en to the god's feet raising
The champion charioteer !

And by the hot Palæstras
In converse with the youth,
Or mingling with the feasters
In rhymes and jests uncouth,

The sage, not sad and tearful,
Nor full of doubts and fearful,
Like Socrates the cheerful
Teaches eternal truth.

With ardours unabating
He strings his thoughts like pearls,
Till, child of his creating,
The flower of truth uncurls ;
He plants not briars nor nettles,
But blooms of fragrant petals,
Where the bee for pleasure settles
And the moth her bright wing furls.

Oh happy, happy nation !
What else so favoured state
Hath Time's untold duration
Won yet for man from Fate ?—
Time, that with slow devotion
Wrests from Fate's gulfy ocean
Like sands of shifting motion
Empires of little date.

Not in Athens, Lacedæmon,
Not in Rome's most happy age

Stood that city of the free man,
Nor in Plato's golden page ;
But sweet slumber came and mingled
All the dreams wherewith I tingled,
From all lands and ages singled,
And built it stage on stage.

And I woke, and lo ! my vision
Was gone on wings of air,
And morn with cold derision
Spread abroad her pallid glare ;
And I rose and penned this ditty,
And wept on it for pity
That no man shall see my city
And no Christian enter there.



THE TWO GARDENS.



BEYOND dim Slumber's hazy slopes,
Beyond where through the pale far dawn
A path for sad Remembrance opes
To that deep threshold, poppy-strawn,
Where fading clouds of vanished years
Still blush with buried hopes and fears,
Two gardens, lit by brackish streams
And rained upon by living tears,
Lie bathed in shadowy golden gleams,—
The Garden of forgotten hopes,
The Garden of our dreams.

There dwells the faint mysterious smile
Which drew thine earliest sweet despair
To realms no after-loves defile,
To dreams no after-days can share ;
The hand which thrilled thee long ago

With that long aching spirit-glow
Thou never more shalt feel on earth,
The lover's tears of holy woe,
The ring of painless childhood's mirth,
The hopes that death holds back awhile,
The dreams before thy birth.

There lie the thoughts a moment viewed,
That through the glory of thy sleep
Have swept in glittering multitude
Like flame of waves across the deep.
There shine the gleams the glimpses pale
Beyond the tides, between the veil
Over the vague hereafter furled,
The reddening stars of wrathful trail
Across thy youth's mad orbit hurled,
The vain compassions that bedewed
The sorrows of the world.

A place of fields, a place of flowers,
A place it is of hidden thorns,
Of sad long days and sweet short hours,
Pained loves and pleasurable scorns,
Of memories long that cling to grief
And lost delights of memory brief,

Of passionate tears and curses wild,
And many a broken lame belief,
And many a bitter smile we smiled,
An arid Spring with no bright showers,
An Autumn without child.

There all day long white lilies wave
And rich red roses bud and bloom,
But every root is in a grave,
And drops each petal on a tomb ;
There wafts of heavy fragrance steep
The sickening soul with love or sleep,
But, breathing, all men surely die ;
There they that straw and they that reap
Are made as one perpetually,
And they that loathe and they that crave,
And all that laugh and sigh.

Then pause not by their flowering groves
While youthful blood is free and red.
Not there the gay or thoughtless roves,
Not there may mirth and music wed,
But barren loves forsaken pine,
And world-sick bards their garlands twine

Of blossoms dripping poisoned streams,
But dear to them as opiate wine,—
Where death is not and life but seems,
The Garden of forgotten loves,
The Garden of our dreams.



BIRDS OF THE TWILIGHT AIR.



BIRDS of the twilight air,
Sing not of love.
Haze of the sunset fair,
Incense of golden prayer,
Distance of sweet despair,
Speak not of love.

Light of the forest pines,
Wake not my pain,
Kindling the meteor lines,
Where, through its serpent twines,
Smooth the green river shines,
Wake not my pain.

CLAUDINE.

THE quaking blaze of the pale blue stars
Pierces the cloud-streak's silver bars,
As a steel-blue sword-blade thin and keen
Cleaving the twilight's duskier green,
Lighting the hills and the streams between ;—
Give me thy hand, Claudine, Claudine.

The olive leaves' moist lustrous hue
Shines silver-shot in the moonlit dew,
And the livid light of the fire-fly weaves
A mazy torch-dance under the leaves,
That cloudlike scatters, and cloudlike cleaves,
As gold corn bound into golden sheaves.

The broad moon sows with a pallid glare
The hazy fields of the twilight air,

Through ruin arches on yon lone isle
Shedding the stream of her icy smile,
Filling the world with its love and guile,
Over the wan waves many a mile.

Burns thine hair with a dusky gold,
A dream-like dull flame misty and cold ;
Burns the sea with a flat white sheen,
Stretching away into depths unseen,
Swathing the shores with a glow-worm's
green ;—

Kiss me again, Claudine, Claudine.



DUSKY CASTALIE.

FAR incense of the golden dawn
Now smokes and steams with powdery light,
Like dust upon the lily strawn,
Like meteors in the hair of night ;
Green burns the erewhile dusky lawn,
The river wings a silvery flight.

I come down to thine ivy bower
To drink in morning's floweriest fumes,
To bathe me in her sunniest shower,
To dream among her leafiest blooms ;
Above my head the white peaks tower,
About my feet the wild bee booms.

Ah whitest, duskiest Castalie,
My lily with the golden head,

Straight, tall, and cold : the kiss to be
 Turns not thine ashen cheek to red.
I see the moon-rise seeing thee
 Walk o'er the grass with stateliest tread.

Clothed in pure white : the plain smooth band
 That locks thy waist with jealous gold :
The gesture of the long thin hand,
 The tall neck's pillar proud and cold :
The fine-spun amber backward fanned,
 That clouds the head's most faultless mould.

Ah pallid Castalie, come forth :
 The music freezes in my soul,
An ice-cloud of the silent North :
 Breathe on it, thaw it, let it roll
In winds and snows about the earth,
 In stormful gusts by sand and shoal.

Still incarnation of the night,
 The star-kissed peaks, the moonlit lea,
The sun-smit desert burning white,
 The quiet shore, the quiet sea,
The soul's despair, the soul's delight,
 Come, whitest, duskiest Castalie.

EUTHANASIA.



EUTHANASIA, crimson-clad,
Bright, unblushing, bold and bad,
Who shall guess what dreams we've had ?
I wonder.

Not the stars in yon green skies,
Bright as jewelled serpents' eyes ;
Not the cold moon's agonies,
Nor the unleashed thunder,
Euthanasia !

Euthanasia, pale and tall,
Splendid, passionate, musical,
Fieriest lover of them all
And hater,

Thou and I be kindred souls,
From Hell's furnace two hot coals,
But fairer than Heaven's common shoals,
Fairer and greater,
Euthanasia !

Euthanasia, thou and I,
Poisoned by man's enmity,
Do we lay us down and die ?
How say you ?
Brethren dear, the worms do so,
As ye trample to and fro :
Some have horns and collars, though,
And turn and slay you.—
Euthanasia !

One man sows, another reaps ;
This one toils, and that one keeps ;
Gainer laughs, and loser weeps ;
God willed it.
Fate from poisoned urn fills up
To the brim thy bitter cup,
Sneers, while on the dregs you sup,
“ 'Tis just : you filled it.”—
Euthanasia !

Then all drinking say, "This bed
For ourselves ourselves have spread ;
We have sinned, on our own head
To heap it :"

Only we from her embrace
Snatch the urn with little grace,
Dash the poison in her face,
And cry "Nay, keep it."
Euthanasia !



AMBER-HAIRED CENONE.



AMBER-HAIRED CEnone, come,
Let thy beauty strike me dumb,
Thy full lip's rich rose of grace
Making paler thy pale face,
Thy great eye's oer-shadowed globe,
And thy saffron-coloured robe ;
Wrap me, fold me out of sight
In thy spirit's star-lit night.

O'er the keyboard bend again,
Draw out all its hidden pain,
Wrench from earth's reluctant soul
Every tale of grief and dole,
Every broken hope and prayer
The great universe can bear,
The o'erladen universe
Groaning 'neath its heavy curse.

I would hear them, know them all,
Griefs and crimes that may befall :
In my spirit space is found
For Heaven's height and Hell's profound :
I would bear them, every one,
If to all men 'neath the sun
I thereby one moment could
Purchase perfect brotherhood.

Rack me with unquenched desire,
Clothe me in eternal fire,
Great disease of soul and flesh,
Breeding hourly tortures fresh,
Madness, fury, and remorse ;
Make my form a living corse :
Hasten, hasten till I know
Hell has left no untried woe.

Then let all the music cease,
Bend o'er me with eyes of peace,
Green and great as shaking stars.
Following on those last sweet bars,
Silence tells me, thou and I,
Sufferers of all Destiny,
Find in all things, good and ill,
Beauty, beauty, beauty still.

HOPES OF YOUTH AND AGE.



WHITHER away, ye birds of morning,
 Into the sunrise away, away?
 Suddenly fled without word or warning
 To meet the light of the rising day,
By green field and fallow, by deep seas and shallow,
 Away.

Where are we flown at the young day's breaking?
 Into the sunrise suddenly flown,
With no grace asked, and with no leave-taking,
 To meet the sun in a land unknown.—
To the unborn we wander in far fields out yonder
 Unsown.

Whither away, ye birds of even,
 Under the sunset, away, away?

Suddenly fled into depths of Heaven
To chase the light of the dying day,
Over hills, along ledges, by ocean's white edges,
Away.

Where are we fled at the old day's setting?
Into the sunset suddenly fled,
Fled without parting, without regretting,
To chase the sun to his dark death-bed.—
We are hopes frail and hollow, that fleet and that
follow
The dead.



SANTA CECILIA.



AH Santa Cecilia,
Touch me and heal me,
Me, storm-swept, even me,
Beyond life's utmost sea ;
Kiss me, and seal me,
Santa Cecilia.

Sweet music and melody,
Ye only left me
Far to my heart out-weigh
Love, hope, faith, reason's ray,
All things bereft me,
Music and melody.

Ah Santa Cecilia,
Kiss off the kisses,

That brand my brow with shame
And madness and lost fame,
The old sweet blisses,
Santa Cecilia.

Sweet music and melody,
Wrap me and swathe me
Between deep breasts of Art :
In fountains of her heart
Steep me and bathe me,
Music and melody.

Ah Santa Cecilia,
Never forsake me ;
In white calm and white storm,
Cold winds and weathers warm,
Let thy voice wake me,
Santa Cecilia.

Sweet music and melody,
Take me and lift me
Above where baser tides
Under sheer mountain-sides
Drive me and drift me,
Music and melody.

Ah Santa Cecilia,
Touch me and heal me,
Me, storm-swept, even me,
Beyond life's utmost sea ;
Kiss me and seal me,
Santa Cecilia.



TO THE RIVER.



BEAR me onward and onward, foam-flecked like
a steed,
Thou swift-flowing stream, under moon, under
star ;
As one horsed upon storm-clouds I throb with thy
speed,
Like an arrow shot swiftly through bridge, over
bar,
Between banks of green tillage, through hamlet
and village,
Afar.

Bear me onward and onward ; I laugh and I burn,
I leap with thine eddies and wrestle and fly,
And my strokes into froth the waves winnow and
churn,

Like the storm-drift the plumes of an eagle may
ply,
And the willow bough brushes my head, and the
rushes

Go by.

Bear me onward and onward ; I hear the winds roar
In the pine-forest round me, and, answering loud,
The brawl of the surges that lash on the shore,
The rattle of thunders far up in the cloud.
Weave, weave, Triton's daughters, with surf of white
waters

My shroud.

Bear me onward and onward in desperate chase,
For I see close before me the Spirit of Death ;
With but three waves between us he leads in the
race,
And "Oh, hasten and hasten to win me," he
saith—
My lip scarce emerges, I catch through the surges
My breath.

NIGHT-WANDERING.



FAR-wandering when rich moonlight drenches
The hollow night's empurpled dome,
And shelving roof and gable blanches,
And paves with fire the paths I roam,
I float about this elfin city,
And thread sweet labyrinthine ways,
A burning Dream of love and pity
On wine-wet wings that steer through haze.

A sheen swims on each darkened casement,
The long canals lie luminous-pale,
And soaring spires, from vane to basement,
All burn steel-blue like warriors' mail ;
And multitudinous over Heaven
Swarm little flakes of dappled fleece,

Wherein the white disc, swathed and shriven,
Of midnight's moon may gloat in peace.

I wander musing songs that never
On lips of man before have burned,
Sweet words that sail with no endeavour
Upon the waves of tunes unlearned,
By winds of unknown passion carried
O'er unknown seas of starless skies,
Where darkness and despair are married
With drowsy fumes of Paradise.

And statue-shapes flit murmuring by me,
Greek-featured, swathed in fiery pain,
Blue-lidded gorgeous globes that eye me,
Wine-coloured hair or amber grain,
Strong-limbed, deep-bosomed as the Graces,
And bird-like poised on wingèd feet,
But with the Furies' pallid faces,
And with the Furies' lips of heat.

While far and faint and sadly taunting,
Like voices from beyond the tomb,
Or memories of some star still haunting
Our dreams of life before the womb,

'Mid smoking light from casements open
Come ebbing airs that swoon and sob
With panting passionate gusts of Chopin,
Or old Béthoven's thunder-throb :

Long wails that flower-like fade and languish,
Stray wraiths of Schubert's sweetest note,
Sad raptures and delicious anguish
That round and o'er me pause and float,
Unfettered souls that do inherit
The thin-aired superlunar clime,
And scarcely less a tune or spirit
I drift with them, a wandering rhyme.



A TRILOGY OF BALLADES.



I.

ALONE in the light of the moon let me wander,
For sweet is the spell of the night to my
breast,

While in musical woe from the forest out yonder
The nightingale warbles her passion to rest.
What is life but a feverish dream at the best,
On a pillow with thorns and with sufferings strown,
Full of visions of blessing that leave us unblest ?
Shall a bird in the Spring linger loveless alone ?

O God, shall I sink to an idle desponder,
Bewailing as lost what was never possessed,
Or learn the pure love of my bosom to squander
On lips that will answer but coldly when pressed ?
Shall I live in the purple of luxury drest,
Like an Orient king on his ivory throne,

By hands that would willingly stab me caressed ?
Shall a bird in the Spring linger loveless alone ?

Away, subtle vision ! e'en now as I ponder
Hope comes to my spirit, a beautiful guest,
And the yearning within me grows deeper and
fonder,
True love in the light of its flame confessed.
The eagle may build on the mountain's crest,
And the lion may keep the wild woods for his own :
I can give to my love but a lowly nest.
Shall a bird in the Spring linger loveless alone ?

L'ENVOY.

Ere the sun of the morrow have set in the west,
I will go to my darling and make my moan.
Think you she will listen to love's request ?
Birds in the Spring are not found alone.

II.

When the glow of the languid light was ended
And earth smiled back to the sun's last ray,
And the palace of Heav'n in the west shone
splendid
As it opened its gates to the chariot day,

By the bank of a ruffled lake I lay,
And the sigh of the wavelets soothed mine ear—
But what were the words of their longing lay?
She cometh, she cometh, she lingers near.

Then a distant murmuring sound ascended
As the wind in the whispering grass 'gan
stray,
And the music of Nature's voices blended
With the tinkle and splash of the falling spray,
As it laughed in the mirth of its wanton play,
Till a voice in my bosom re-echoing clear
Told me the same sweet tale as they—
She cometh, she cometh, she lingers near.

Then I lifted mine eyes, and behold there
wended
By the banks of the waters, in white array,
The form that I long had awaited, and then did
My heart for a moment its motion stay,
And the breathless breeze with a mute delay
Sank, and there was not a sound to hear,
But the very silence seemed to say
She cometh, she cometh, she lingers near.

L'ENVOY.

She came in the dusk of the twilight grey,
But it was not the maid to my true heart dear,
And the wind laughed loud as I wandered away,
She cometh, she cometh, she lingers near.

III.

Could I see in the tremulous glitter
Of her glances the venom confined?
Could I bring my charmed spirit to quit her
As she lay with locks loose in the wind,
And head on my bosom reclined,
Her lips full of smiles and repose,
While my hand in her own lay resigned—
A worm in the heart of the rose?

I had woven a chaplet to fit her
Of lilies and roses combined:
Were they flowers on that day that were knit, or
Steel fetters to goad my mind?
Were my eyes and my soul made blind?
Did I dream she would love to the close?
Death lurked in the fruit's fair rind,
A worm in the heart of the rose.

All things are half sweet and half bitter ;
When we laugh the tears linger behind.
Hear the birds how they restlessly twitter
When their mates have proved false or unkind,
Shallow love a fair bosom may bind :
Rich caskets may trifles enclose :
A fool in her heart may be shrined—
A worm in the heart of the rose.

L'ENVOY.

In the garland of life is entwined
The henbane of poisonous woes :
Let the lover beware lest he find
A worm in the heart of the rose.



R O N D E A U.

(IRREGULAR.)



HADST thou loved me, I had not sown
Waste fens with holiest love, nor quailed
At sorrow : sin I had not known
Hadst thou loved me.

With ankles winged my feet had scaled
The peaks that mock me left alone,
Not battled with the world, and failed.

Yea, like Noah's dove I had not flown
Shrieking abroad where wild winds wailed
And found no place to call mine own,
Hadst thou loved me.

SONNET PAR RONSARD.



QUAND vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la
chandelle,

Assise auprès du feu, devidant et filant,

Direz chantant mes vers et vous esmerveillant :

Ronsard me célébroit du temps que j'estois belle.

Lors, vous n'aurez servante oyant telle nouvelle,

Desja sous le labeur à demy sommeillant,

Qui, au bruit de Ronsard ne s'aïlle réveillant,

Bénissant vostre nom de louange immortelle.

Je seray sous la terre, et, fantosme sans os,

A SONNET BY RONSARD.



WHEN thou art deep in years, at eve, by the
wick's flare

Winding the skeins and spinning, seated near the
blaze,

Shalt say, singing my verse, and filled with self-
amaze,

"Ronsard was loud of me in days when I was fair."

Then not a maid thou hast, but, of such news aware
(On whom long half-asleep the weight of labour
weighs),

At sound of Ronsard straight her head shall raise
Calling thy name much blest that deathless praise
to wear.

I shall be under earth : my boneless wraith shall
keep

Par les ombres myrteux je prendai mon repos ;
Vous serez au fouyer une vieille accroupie ;

Regrettant mon amour et vostre fier dédain
Vivez ; si m'en croyez n'attendez à demain :
Cueillez dès aujourd'huy les roses de la vie.



Amid the myrtle shades its everlasting sleep :

You squatted at the hearth will be a sour old
wife :

Live to regret my love and your too haughty scorn,
Or, if you take my word, wait not the morrow's
morn,

But timely cull to-day the roses of sweet life.



LE JEUNE BARBAROUX.



PASSENGER, pilgrim in the land of fear,
The sound of Death's feet growing in thine
ear,
The sight of Death's face rising on thy view,
What change in thee since this time yester-year !
Young Barbaroux.

Bright-haired Apollo with the hero's eyes,
That dreamest dreams too fair for earthly skies,
Man free and equal, all things fair and true,
What shadows dark across thy dream arise ?
Young Barbaroux.

Where now thy France ? where now the chosen
band
Of thy companions ? where the fair Roland ?

All these are gone, and what thing left to you ?
Perchance the gallows in some foreign land,
Young Barbaroux.

They come again to thee, the old sweet days,
Back in a tear-dimmed vision of dead praise ;
The spires of Paris rise through morning's hue
Clad with the world's hope to thy spirit's gaze,
Young Barbaroux.

Thy word went forth, and all France heard the
cry,
"Send me six hundred men prepared to die !"
To arms the Marseillaise that moment flew,
For Greek blood burns yet 'neath Massilia's sky,
Young Barbaroux.

From sabres old they scour the gathered rust :
Who bids them die but the one man they trust ?
The dusty roads have heard an anthem new,
Destined to shake the old world into dust,
Young Barbaroux.

Upon the Feast of late loud chimed the bell,
But Paris burns with smothered fires of hell,

For hopes may fail, and chiefs may prove untrue ;

They enter Paris with a tiger's yell,
Young Barbaroux.

"Strike down the tyrant : citizens, to arms :
Form your battalions !" What high note alarms
The traitor snakes in Freedom's breast that
grew ?

Who now shall shield his France from all her
harms ?

Young Barbaroux.

And now 'mid strangers, with a broken pride,
Craving the crust withheld, the draught denied,
The straw begrudged beneath thine head to
strew,

Thou wanderest through the great world bleak
and wide,

Young Barbaroux.

Faithful to death, unchanged by fear or grief,
Clinging, brave boy, to thy sublime belief,
Clasp to thine heart the poor red, white and blue ;
The seed shall spring yet from the ruined sheaf,

Young Barbaroux.

The flag, that covered France too short a while,
With holy shade, now fear and blood defile,
 And through the world deep threatening storm-
 clouds brew.
Look through to clearer heavens beyond, and smile,
 Young Barbaroux.

Freedom, her arm outstretched but lips firm
 set,
Freedom, her eyes with tears of pity wet,
 But her robe splashed with drops of bloody
 dew,
Freedom, thy goddess, is our goddess yet,
 Young Barbaroux.

Freedom, that tore the robe from kings away,
That clothed the beggar-child in warm array,
 Freedom, the hand that raised, the hand that
 slew,
Freedom, divine then, is divine to-day,
 Young Barbaroux.

We drown, we perish in a surging sea ;
We are not equal, brotherly, nor free ;—

Who from this death shall stoop and raise us?
who?

Thy Freedom, and the memory of such as thee,
Young Barbaroux.



BALLADE.

THE soul that once her power confesses
All other loveliness denies,
To ponder o'er each charm which blesses
The brow that beauty deifies,
A pale cloud of the summer skies
Fringed with the sunset of her hair,
For some sweet spell our gazing ties
To linger chained for ever there.

The hand which strays among her tresses
To lose itself in Paradise
Through fragrant tangled wildernesses,
Where the enamoured moonbeam lies,
Would pause, a willing sacrifice,
A bird within a golden snare,
And freedom from that hour despise
To linger chained for ever there.

The lip which once her soft cheek presses,
Or tastes the incense of her sighs,
Lives as the flower by Spring's caresses,
And withers when the sunshine flies.
Still would it feel each blush that dyes
Her wan neck warm the panting air,
And leave the red wine others prize
To linger chained for ever there.

L'Envoy.

Oh, that I were a thought to rise
In her pure dreams, her soul, her prayer,
The laughter lurking in her eyes,
To linger chained for ever there.



HELOISE AND ABELARD.



I.

THE page lies open : line on swimming line
The illuminated letters faintly shine :
But the lamp, dwindled to one livid spark,
Burns like a glow-worm swathed in grasses
dark,

And Night, contending with her moonshine, weaves
A broadening shadow 'twixt the rounded leaves ;
For through the lattice with its diamond-panes
The over-flooded heavens' green glory rains,
Like slant light filtering through the green sea's
waves,

Strewing with twilight hues her buried caves,
And chequers all the floor with dazzling squares,
The wall, the groined roof, and the steep stone
stairs

They read not now, those twain, the poet-sage
Whose thought's waves blaze across the inspired
page,

As the strong winds plough up his deep calm
soul,

Ruffling the level till the great seas roll
With boiling under-currents upward hurled
From prisons far below the firm-set world,
Winds of strong love and virtue and holy scorn.
They read not now of Courage wisdom-born,
Of Temperance, child of calm or shame or truth,
Nor the pure brother's love of youth for youth,
Twin Sophists plunged where laughing waters met,
And Gorgias tangled in a starry net,
Of piety puzzled, or, fallen on crossing seas,
Poor Ion laughed at by old Socrates,
Nor of the city of the truly wise
Where life walks free, nor the soul's destinies,
But Abelard's sweet voice was smitten dumb,
Reading of love in the Symposium.

He told how Love drew up the soul to see
Secrets of time and of eternity,
How man left earth beneath him, upward led
To where sweet Passion and sweet Science wed,

And upward ever, till at length he stood
Close face to face with the Idea of Good ;
But this high Love's first impulse ever came
Cloaked in the guise of some sweet earth-born
 flame,
When all man's body burns and spirit swims
With the glory of golden hair and snow-white limbs.

Then Abelard turned to Heloïse, and their eyes
Met, and truth darted through shame's thin disguise,
And, with a shock as when two storm-clouds
 meet,
Soul stormed to soul, and brake in tears, and fleet
The bright flame darted death-fraught from their
 gaze,
And the bolt fell, and filled all heaven with the
 blaze.

And now they sit with drinking looks and lips,
And hot blood tingling to the finger-tips,
The book forgot, unclosed, the lamp burned out,
The wizard moonlight hovering round about
With all the magic of its gauzy wings,
A green flame burning on the yellow strings
Of Heloïse' hair, and face rapt as a saint's,
And on their lips the perfumed twilight faints.

Long had they put away the gloomy creed
Of holy men that starve and gods that bleed
That the whole world might quicken from their
 blood,

But passion-watered doubt, the tender bud,
Had grown to sweet philosophy, the flower
Of luscious scent, the fruit of many a shower.
And now had dropped from off the starry sky
The darkness of a desolate world, the cry
That man is evil, and most vile his love,
And all good dwells apart, beyond, above,
Save in dim cloisters and secluded cells,
Unlettered minds, cold lives, and muttered spells,
Fasting and flagellations, nettles, briars,
The bath of ice, the crucible of fires.—
These things they had long put from them, wiser
 grown,

And sucked the honey of Plato, and freely sown
Their spirits with the seed of ancient lore,
And put by wisdom in a golden store.

But alway with cold reverence they drank
The deep still fount in common, and each shrank
From touch of other's hand or fervent look,
If, as it chanced, some passage in the book

Awoke unwary fire on either's cheek ;
And Abelard would alway calmly speak,
Parting this thought from that with trenchant skill,
Unravelling the close web with patient will ;
And Heloise heard, and wondered, and he seemed
A god to her, no less : of him she dreamed
Wild wildered visions in the thoughtless night,
And paler sought him in the morning white.
And still they soared together, and her sire
Marked not as yet the young maid's hidden fire,
Nor deemed of Abelard save as a cold man.

But on this eve the rainbow paths that span
Love's gulfy heavens, full of cloud and storm,
Home of fierce airs and pent blasts raging warm,
Brake under them, and through the dizzy dome
They fell sheer downward into surge and foam,
And wildered with deep thoughts and strange and
sweet
And fiery images on pinions fleet,
Like feverish dreams that make the sick brain swim,
Locked frantic breast to breast and limb to limb.

II.

A year had passed, and one dark moonless hour
Heloïse had left her home.

“ Ah ! gentlest flower,
Share thou with me my life, my hope, my fame.
The priest’s consent shall wipe from thee this
shame

And from thy babe. This will I bear for thee—
To sanction once the world’s cold blasphemy.
Nay, we shall kneel before the altar, thou
And I, to take on us the foolish vow,
Feel in our ears the mutterings of the mass,
And in our nostrils, when the white priests pass,
The fumes of swaying censers, in our eyes
The colours of the blazing tapestries
And all the broideries on the gaudy stoles :
And vile ascetics shall unite our souls,
Puffing their sallow cheeks with windy pride,
Fancied fruition of a strength denied
To all for whom such ordinance was framed,
(Thou knowest the foul words making love ashamed)
And ”——

“ Never, never shall that hour be born !
What care have we for the weak fool’s weak scorn ?
Is’t not enough, my Abelard, for me
In sight of those divinest eyes to be,
To drink thy wisdom and to hear thy voice,
And in the triumph of thy fame rejoice ?

What care have I for the poor name of wife,
Who share the inner secret of thy life ?
Are all wives, then, so favoured and so pure
That I would change with them my name
obscure,

Mistress of Abelard and of his fate ?

Name me the queen that owns a name so great !
Nay, better for thee, far from paltry cares
And all the crown of thorns a father wears,
To dwell apart with studious hours serene,
And of the rest bid Heloïse reign the queen,
Spare hours and profitless, when brain and breast
Once in the turning moon crave love and rest.
Not thine to list to children's peevish cries,
Waste precious days in social vanities,
And sink into that slave of lust and sloth,
The father of a family : I am loth
To be thy wife, for wives I see but few
Who win the high love I have won from you.
Chaste, virtuous, cold, they give and take enough,
Much faithful duty and a little love ;—
But we, we have learned other things than these,
Our love is of the soul, free, high, at ease,
And like the lark, that owns no vassalage,
Would pine and perish prisoned in a cage."

III.

“Philosophy be now mine only bride,
Pent in by cloister walls on every side,
More than a man in mind, but less in frame ;
Fulbert, thy vengeance crowns despair with shame.
I never shall be what I might have been :
Walking with hope love knew no fear between.
Some, like the snake, that fears for his sweet mate,
Dread their own kiss, and feel love mixed with
hate ;

Their sighs seem poison, murder their embrace,
Yet their heart overflows with wells of grace ;
Their will at variance with itself, they nurse
Destruction wreathed with love, the supreme curse.
In such sweet hope and fear wage piteous strife,
Doubt and self-knowledge sap the joys of life ;
But I, whom hope and love led hand in hand,
Whose toil was joy, whose joy was self-command,
Whose single spirit nursed no deathless feud,
Who loved companionship and solitude,
I, like a snake mangled and impotent,
Turn on my vitals mine own discontent.
And she, the free bird, prisoned like her mate,
Beats on the bars her wings disconsolate,

The priestess of a creed she knows untrue,
No star to cheer the midnight of her view,
Devote to vows she cannot count sincere,
Living a false life in an unfit sphere ;
Hedged with stone-walls that shut the sunlight out,
Though a worse prison compasses about
Her soul, and from all high communion parts,
A hard flint wall of narrow human hearts.
Poor bird, she spends the daylight dreaming of
My withered glory, and her broken love,
The marriage forced upon her, and our child—
My brain and heart at war make riot wild,
Despair grows too like hope in thoughts like these.
Back to thy fate, my heart ; stagnate and freeze,
Till death unlock thy stream and let thee flow
Warm to the deep sea, whither all things go ;
Then thou shalt clasp her, or with quiet breath
Sleep in the shadows of the fields of death.
And future ages at thy name shall say,
He lived in anguish, and he passed away
From a dark life by a mean death removed ;
“ But he had glory, and he was beloved.”

A DITHYRAMB.



“Ὡς Διονυσοῖ’ ἀνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος
Οἶδα διθύραμβον οἶνῳ συγκεραννωθεὶς φρένας.”

—ARCHILOCUS, *Fragments*, 38 Liebel.

LET us sing to the god Dionysus with thunder
of wine in our head ;
Let us scatter from bowl and from chalice the blood
that the grape-god has shed,
With the chaplet of vine and the thyrsus, with the
scream of the flute, with the lyre,
With a shaking of hair to the music and waving
of fire.

From the throng of the naked Mænads, with throbbing
of rhythmical feet,
Now we sever around the altar, and now in a frenzy
meet,

As we tangle again and unravel the tangled dance
till the dawn,
Clad with the skin of the leopard, and shod with
the fawn.

Lo Zeus to the daughter of Cadmus descended with
storm in his eyes,
The zone cast off, and the saffron robe, and the
frantic sighs,
The treacherous wiles of a goddess, presumptuous
daughter of earth,
The snowy limbs scalded by thunder, the pre-
mature birth ;

The second abode in a marvellous womb, the mira-
culous throes,
The second issuing forth and the thrill of familiar
woes ;
The nurture of nymphs on Mount Nysa, the burn-
ing of jealous scars,
The babe now changed to a youth, and the
maidens to stars !

But Heré swoops from the cloud, from Olympus,
 revenge in her wings ;
He knows in his veins the madness, and burns with
 ineffable stings ;
He scatters the dust of deserts, he drinks of the
 mountain wind
By the monsters of Egypt's rivers, the rubies of
 Ind.

He storms at the gate of Hell ; he severs the throng
 of the shades,
He wets his feet with the Styx, through the meadow
 of asphodel wades ;
He looks upon Persephatta, and laughs, and, the
 death-bonds riven,
Snatches his mother from Hades and sets her in
 Heaven.

On the ridges of high Cithæron the shrill of the
 box-wood flute,
The tramping of hornèd satyrs with many a hornèd
 foot ;

The woes of the rebel Pentheus, the mangled mistaken shape,
And the spilling of other blood than the blood of the grape !

Who sails on the deep for Naxos, a young god rosy with wine ?

But is it a ship or a vineyard ? equipped with the flax or the vine ?

Amid lashing of fiery serpents, and roaring of lions, and scream

Of invisible flutes it is vanished, and gone like a dream.

And the mariners toss like dolphins over the pitching wave,

Who bargain'd for gold, Dionysus, to sell thee, a god, for a slave ;

And thou with foot in the shells art soothing the desolate dove

Who pines for a fading of sails and the fading of love.

ALCÆUS.

ALCÆUS sat above the sea,
And struck across his lyre ;
About him blue immensity,
And night-winds breathing fire.
He called the Queen of billowy limb
O'er billowy sand and shoal,
To take the song that broke from him
And breaking burned his soul.

“ Her threads of hair are amber fine,
Her lip a curling wave ;
The quick flash of her turning eyne
Would thrill me in the grave.
Her cast-off zone, if one should steal,
It throngs with magic such,
That he who touches it may feel
The lightnings of her touch.

“ The gurgling rush of swollen brooks,
The hiss of southern seas,
Burst through her eager lips and looks ;
Her silken-sided knees
Are pink as shells : she walks like wind,
Or light, or thought, or sound ;
A tingling air she leaves behind,
A flame-track on the ground.

“ So here I sit and harp all night
To storm, and cloud, and star,
Though music fails my keen delight,
And voice fades off afar.
What blast of flutes shall sweep to thee,
What lightning-word declare,
The throb of life that came to me
Through the flame-cloud of her hair ? ”



ALL PASSES.



“ Δέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει,
καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ ἀπεικάζων τὰ θνῆτα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν
ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίησ.”—PLATO, *Cratylus*, p. 402 A.

WHERE, where are the fevers and sobs,
The beat of the storm and the sea,
The passions whose memory throbs
E'en yet like a flame-cloud in me?
Where, where now the thronging of dreams,
The reflux fullness of May?
All, all like the meeting of streams,
Far away.

The wonders at clouds and at waves,
The yearning to mountains afar,
The echoes, the eddies in caves,
The pine-forest pierced by the star,

Dream-music of great things to come,
Deep hazes of amber before,
Sweet voices, sweet wishes, now dumb
Evermore.

Where, where the ineffable pain,
The worship, the slumberless night,
The tears that return not again,
The agony grown a delight?
The gleams in the bronze-golden hair,
The halo around it that lay,
The kneeling, the impious prayer?
Far away.

And bereavement, that wanders in gloom
By desolate places of fear,
The starless red storm-rise of doom,
The sorrow that sheds not a tear,
The whirlwind that breaks with a blast
On the strong heart surviving alone,—
All, all die away overpast,
Overblown.

Men gaze over depth, over shoal:
For some isle of the blest they depart;

Soul leaps forth in song unto soul,
Heart answers in echo to heart ;
But the isle with the cloud-rack retires
Deep, deep into infinite day,
And the soul from the soul that desires
Far away.

All have drunk from the well-heads of hope,
Or fed the sweet pain of desire ;
In the dark for the day-star they grope,
Or caress with stray fingers the lyre ;
But the day-star unbars not her fane,
The lyre keeps her music in thrall.
Broken hearts, broken harp-strings remain—
That is all.

Thunder-swift as age follows on age,
With a glare one by one they arise,
Some awful and desolate sage,
Some youth as with storm-throbbing eyes.
The nations take fire at his word,
“I have found it,” the world hears him say ;
Men acclaim, and their thunders are heard
Far away.

And sweet singers, their voices return
With the springing and shedding of leaves ;
From the burning heart scattered they burn
In each heart where their memory cleaves.
But all changes, all passes, all wanes ;
In eternity time is an isle,
The one loses the other shore gains—
For a while.

Where, where are the lips that have met
In the delicate deadly embrace ?
Do they feed on new lips with regret ?
Can the old love light up the new face ?
Upon heart-aches and poisons they feed,
With desire in them fast growing grey :
With new pangs, with new sorrows they bleed,
Far away.

They forget, when the heart falls asleep ;
They forget, when the dream is gone by ;
This alone they forget not—to weep,
And forget not to suffer and die.
They toss snaky hair in the dance,
They kiss the red scourge of their pain ;
But youth comes with her fortunate chance
Not again.

Where, where are the raptures that climb,
As with plumes of quick lightning, to heaven ;
The lips pressed unto lips the first time,
The blood throbbing, the heart-strings half
riven ;
Feet blazing with fire not of earth,
Hot eyeballs, and eyelids that weigh,
The voice melting in sobs or in mirth ?
Far away.

The ebb follows fast on the flood,
And winter at last upon spring,
The wreck of the flower on the bud,
And change after everything.
Peace comes where aforetime was strife,
But on peace strife again shall descend,
And death's reflux waters on life,
Till the end.

Heracleitus, full true was thy speech,
Though men mock at the wisdom of old :
All changes, all flows beyond reach :
There is nothing of this we may hold.

As one tightens his grasp upon sand,
While it slips through his fingers astray,
So they slip, all our joys, from the hand
Far away.

Then pluck out all love from the heart :
Let us seek but the Moments of joy.
Let us yearn, let us kiss, let us part,
Ere the taste of the honey can cloy.
But the soul, will it cease then to shape
Some ideal, and fill it with breath ?
From himself there is none shall escape
Until death.

Yet Theocritus nods o'er the lyre,
And Anacreon laughs to the sun ;
These lived and fulfilled their desire,
And lay down when the sands were all run.
Why sap we our life with vain fears ?
Why go we not joyous as they ?
Thou fool, for these lived in the years
Far away.

These knew not each vein in their form,
Nor measured the stars of the air ;

God spake to them out of the storm,
And death came to them unaware.
Still, still he is wisest of men,
The old sage, and wiser than we,
For in knowledge is grief now, as then,
And shall be.

Where, where are the gods of mankind?
Where Moloch, and Isis, and Zeus?—
Blind creatures adored of the blind,
Old symbols gone long out of use,
Bright deities born of the sun,
Dark gods with the night for their sway,
They are vanished, all, all, every one,
Far away.

Now the Earth-shaker hides in the reeds,
With beside him the great triple spear;
And Apollo borne off by his steeds,
Throws a last, longing look at his sphere;
And the nymphs have deserted the lawn,
And the Dryad forsaken the trees;
And the Mænad, and Satyr, and Faun,
Where are these?

Of Cythera the billowy queen

Her old mother the brine has regained ;

And Herè has sated her teen,

And the wrong of her beauty disdained ;

And the rivers with reeds in their hair

' From gold goblets receive not red spray ;

And the incense-wreaths curl into air

Far away.

And the shepherd belated at eve

Hears no longer the fluting of Pan ;

The three sisters no more sit and weave

The shot web of the life-threads of man ;

And Dis with his sceptre of might

Sinks himself to Cocytus consigned,

With his asphodel meads, out of sight,

Out of mind.

And the Muses, the Muses, alas !

Stare cold under federal brows :

They count not the years as they pass,

Nor shall any their slumbers arouse ;

And by chance if one wakens and cries,

She comes crowned with the yew, not the bay,

Like a desolate music that dies

Far away.

*

And deaf is the Mother bereft,
As her brazen-mouthed cymbals are dumb,
To whom none of her children are left,
And who quakes for her children to come ;
And the wild Corybantian throng
Is forgotten of mountain and shore ;
And the winds bear to seaward no song
As of yore.

And saints in their cloisters may freeze
Below slabs of white marble forgot ;
And knights with their iron-clad knees
Put by in old abbeys to rot :
No more among nettles they roll,
Nor exult the proud Paynim to slay ;
And God grant it goes well with their soul
Far away.

But the chasuble, tarnished and torn,
Is but moth-eaten velvet and gold ;
And the keys and the crosier we scorn,
Which could crush mighty monarchs of old.
The niche yawns, or a stump still remains ;
And the tapers more scantily glow,
And the fire in the thurible wanes,—
Let it go.

Where, where are the kingdoms of old ?

Where Egypt, Assyria, now,

And Lydia, paven with gold,

And Persia, regal of brow ?

Where Athens, imperial Rome ?

All these had their growth and decay,

And the sons of their sons find a home

Far away.

The Phœnician sails not the deep,

And the Tyrian brews not his dyes,

And old Carthage lies buried in sleep

Where Tunis the barbarous lies.

And we know not a Greek from a Turk,

But the Roman by vices we know ;

For all these had accomplished their work

Long ago.

And the high Macedonian hand,

That had smitten to ashes a world,

Is scattered abroad like the sand

From the lap of the hurricane hurled :

And the world, where he lies, amid space

Leaps along, and a glimmering ray

Serves alone to distinguish its place

Far away.

The world shakes, the world laughs, the world leaps,
 "O dust of the dust, what art thou?"

Lo, the ocean I wear with its deeps
 Like a robe ; the snow circles my brow ;
I speed among stars, and am free ;
 I clasp the white clouds to my breast ;
And I give thee a corner in me—
 Be at rest.

And another, the beautiful fiend,
 Stands there with arms folded like snakes,
With head on his bosom half leaned,
 And lips that no blood ever slakes :
He looms with his foot upon thrones,
 A colossus of cloud or of clay,
Over Austerlitz paven with bones
 Far away.

Lo, the mountains to bar him in vain
 Their snowy battalions spread ;
He cleaves through their snows to the plain,
 And scatters their vales with his dead.
But unstained the Sarmatian snow,
 Clean now is the land of the Rhine ;
Of the wreck of his hosts they can show
 Not a sign.

Go, go to original night,
Thou conqueror crowned of the earth,
To the realm beyond hope, out of sight,
To the dark where thou wast before birth,
To no penal unperishing flame,
To no life of remorse and dismay,
Like a taper blown out with thy shame
Far away.

Didst thou dream of a Titan's disdain
To hurl back on the smiter his blow?
Nature scorns thee too greatly to pain :
Thou wast, thou art not,—be it so ;
But she moves in her circle sublime,
Not a tear nor a smile on her face,
And forgets thee, now gone out of time
Out of space.

Where, where art thou, Father of souls?
We would clasp thee, we know that thou art :
Like an ocean thine influence rolls
With its billows of love o'er our heart.
We would know thee, would cling to thy peace,
In thy bosom find shelter for aye,
And let wrong and its memory cease
Far away.

But thy thunders, thy thunders awake,
And they scatter all living like chaff,
And the good and the evil must quake
When thy whirlwinds and tempests but laugh.
No name have our tongues to bestow ;
Only this, thou art other than we.
We arise like a wave, and we go ;
Thou shalt be.



HYMN TO ARTEMIS.

HAIL, Queen Artemis, the terror of the deep
Arcadian valleys,
Threading with thy nymphs the error of the inter-
lacing alleys,
Drawn by stags with antlers golden, o'er the ridge
and by the river,
In thy tunic short infolden, with thy boar-spear
and thy quiver,
Queen of fell and forest olden, virgin and a queen
for ever !

Lo, the shed leaves whirl and scatter, thick as
flakes in wildest winters,
And like gasp and gust that shatter fir and pine
tree into splinters,

Loud as beat and throb of surges, tread and tramp
of feet draws nigher
Up the still and seamy verges, panting, pulsing,
higher, higher,
Then the storm of hunt emerges, open-mouthed
with eyes of fire.

Hounds that fill the vale with clamour, snowy feet
like sea-fowl flocking ;
Eyes that pierce the green and glamour of the
leaves and shadows rocking ;
Naked knees beneath the kirtle, dripping tresses
tightly knotted ;
Shaft and spear, that shriek and hurtle, where with
speckled skin and spotted
Through the laurel, through the myrtle, spent and
pierced the wild doe trotted.

Guardian to the careful shepherds of the tender
ewe and yeanning,
Fostress of the cubs of leopards, friend to wolf-
whelp and to weanling,
By hid track and devious digress see I thee a path
unravel

Through the underwood and high grass, over slope
and over level,
Eileithyia to the tigress grovelling in the pangs of
travail.

Iron-footed, planted high on mountains dewy with
the morning,
Lo, the open-eyed Orion, storm and cloud beneath
him scorning,
With his giant stature stunting elm and oak tree to
a sapling,
Browed like lightning, heaven-confronting, bow of
ram's horn tightly grappling,
Seeks, with spirit bent on hunting, leafy glades the
dawn is dappling.

Lo, the chase with thee beside him, lo, the wild
deer spied and stricken,
Chastened lids that proudly eyed him, giant limbs
that swoon and sicken ;
Lo, the violent caresses ! hark the bowstring sud-
den twanging !
There he lies with gory tresses on his marble
bosom hanging,
Cast up by the wildernesses with the vultures o'er
him clanging.

And Actæon lies awaiting, couched among the
myrtle blossom,
With broad eager eyes dilating and with palpitating
bosom ;
Till along the grass-grown edges, where the stag-
nant water curdles,
All thy nymphs on jutting ledges lay their robes
and lay their girdles,
Naked 'mong the flowering sedges sport like lambs
within the hurdles.

Snapt a twig, a leaflet ruffled, one hath spied him
fast escaping,
Half a hundred breasts are muffled with a mist of
snowy draping,
Thou, with deadly anger blanching, criest, "Go !
be thou transmuted
To a stag with antlers branching !" stood he there
a moment rooted,
Then, into the forest launching, fled, a dun fawn
snowy-footed.



ODE TO EUTERPE.



MY goddess, my glorious goddess, unchanging
as death or despair,
Wild passion-flower blent in thy tresses with blossoms
less mournfully fair,
Whose sufferings soar above joy, and whose joy is
to love or to wine,
As the cataracts roar to the river's, the song of the
planets to mine.

I have seen thee in forests and mountains, in stars,
and the throb of the storm,
Through the pillars of granite in caverns have
caught a stray glimpse of thy form ;
In the infinite frenzy of music have heard thee, in
sobs, and in tears,
In the agonies deep below hell, and the raptures
high over the spheres.

In the numberless sand of the shore, in the number-
less laugh of the sea,
In the sunlight, the moonlight, the starlight, the
light of eyes lighted by thee,
The scorn that cast over the world, the love that
was deeper than death,
The love that has fed me with calm, and the strife
with tempestuous breath ;

In the multitude, yes, or the desert, or desolate void
of great night,
With a dome of black vapour above on an ocean
of phosphorous white,
In the ruby-red glare of the dawn upon peaks of
immaculate snow,
By the emerald light of pure rivers, or lakes where
the lotus-leaves grow ;

Among blossoms of carmine, and berries of scarlet,
and leaves silver-grey,
Pink petals all purpled with amber, and sprinkled
with fire-coloured spray,

In tangles and trammels and clusters of foliage,
water-flag, fern,
And in amorous meshes of bronze-dappled gold,
where caresses may burn.

Where, where upon earth art thou not? Having
kissed thee, who robs me of mine?
Not famine, nor fever, nor fear, I have known thee,
and thou art divine,
Have caught thee, and held thee, and kissed thee,
and called thee mine own to the grave,
And all thine ineffable love has gone over my soul
like a wave.

Though the lightning should blast, or the pestilence,
yes, or the slander of men,
Though his body a honey-comb grow, and his house
be a wild beast's den,
Though he drink his own tears, craving water, and
gnaw his own flesh, craving bread,
Let the singer be true to his goddess, nor curse her
before he be dead.

She comforts the death-throe of love, she peoples
the desolate world,
She fills the long dreams of despair with a glory of
heavens unfurled.
She shakes out the tresses of stars : she rends the
impassable veil :
She cleaves to the heart's heart of nature, and
crosses the mystical pale.

My goddess, my glorious goddess, unchanging
through mutable years,
My lips have long bled on thy hands, I have
watered thy feet with hot tears.
Thy goad has been sharp to endurance, but better
than love and most sweet
To clasp thee with passionless fervour and weep on
thy pitiless feet.

In the dawn of the world they have maddened,
they madden and throng to thee now,
With the murderous fire in the heart and the
wreath on the death-damped brow.

They have strewn the cold hills with their bones,
they have thrilled with ineffable pain,
And they sleep in the bosom of death, with the
love all purged out of their brain.

Yet the unendurable throb of the hearts that have
warmed with thy wine,
Still beats to us swan-like music and agonies more
than divine,
O'er deserts of centuries still from the vocal oases
of eld ;
But to me thou hast given the pangs, and the
chaplet of bay-leaf withheld.

Whom, whom do I see with the lyre by the throng
of the chariot course,
Come to wrap the perennial robe of his voice
round a conquering horse ?
Whom, whom in the waves round Lesbos, and
whom o'er the scorious brink
Of the hissing unfathomed volcano in fire and in
agony sink ?

Whom, whom in his grey head's glory, accursed in
his child and wife,
With the slanderous stain of madness, and staining
his age with strife?
Whom struck by a stone from heaven, in exile and
age? and whom
Eaten of dogs like Actæon and buried afar from
home?

Whom preying on gloom in prison for love that was
offered to hate?
Whom wasting in youth and fame for a mad love
baffled by fate?
Whom living alone in the spirit, and that for a
child's love dead,
And hearing the stars of his Paradise singing her
name overhead?

Whom by the Rhine stream's purple embayed in
the amber of morn,
Growing to stature of gods and cursing the hour
he was born?

Whom from his bitter bondage, with roar of a lion
long bound,
Bursting the meshes and shaking the forest with
terrors of sound?

Whom found in his youthful beauty, of bread and
of life bereft?
Whom with his hot tears steeping a daisy his share
had cleft?
Whom dying in altered Hellas with words of fire
on his tongue?
Whom tossed by the waves off Pisa with worlds in
his heart unsung?

All, all, and what others? my goddess, lie drenched
with the dew-spring of death,
But fill all the populous earth with fires of un-
quenchable breath;
As the trenchant fire-tongues of the sunlight they
find the heart's innermost shrine,
And show through the gloom with a flash the
scarce diamonds hid in the mine.

Youth clasps to his bosom the record of sorrows
long over and past,
When the throb of life's earliest tempest comes on
through the day over-cast,
And the fire-wells of agony open with sullen hot
rain of despair,
That washes with ominous torrents the ominous
weight of the air.

And the maiden with heavy wet tresses and heavy
rings under the eyes,
Droops head in the dusking twilight, and dreams
till the twilight dies,
Of the old love broken and blighted, the new love
less than it seemed,
While some snatch of a long-dead singer brings
back to her all she has dreamed.

Thou art high above all, O my goddess, though
deep and unbearably deep
Are the agonies thou hast to give and the steps to
thy sanctuary steep.

'Tis the touch of thy lips we implore, having which,
the world's laurel may rust,
In the heart of thy votaries live, and accept in thy
bosom their dust.



NITOCRIS' FEAST.



THERE reigned of old in Memphis by the Nile
King Mentheshuphis, slain by traitor guile
Of kindred swords. Bewailed of few he bled :
Save his one sister's scarce a true tear shed :—
Bewailed of her in secret, for great grief
To some great end can walk without relief.
Nay, when the murderers with yet reeking hand
Would offer her the crown of all the land,
She simply smiled that smile serene and light
No man may wear, few even read aright :
As when Dawn rises blushing from her bed,
And soft clouds bathe them in the morning-
red,
Low fly the swallows, and in sheltered bays
White wings collect from over watery ways,

Yet ocean slumbers like the face of Death
In that still smile, and Nature holds her breath :
Even such her look : they whispering, " Lo, how
She lusted for the crown, and takes it now
While yet the warm wounds of her brother bleed !
Who loves the issue half approves the deed."
She steadfast with the royal look of power
Moves up the ivory steps, through Egypt's flower
Of youth and maid, and sinks in fold on fold
Of costly purples on the fretted gold,
Sets on her virgin hair the jewelled weight
Of empire, round her wraps the cares of state.
They part secure until the funeral feast.

Meanwhile she breathes in ear of Isis' priest,
A silent man, dark-browed and cold, in whom
A secret buried lay as in the tomb.
Two spacious chambers, paved and walled around
With costly stone, lie scooped far underground.
In one they lay the king in gorgeous guise,
The other garnish for the day. One dyes
With shapes of beast and bird the stone wall's face
In record of his reign. The carvers chase
Goblets of gold, in gold and ebony
The benches and the tables sumptuous lie.

*

The day is come. They flock with one accord

To mock with reverent rites their slaughtered lord.

Slaves set on dishes and abundant wine

In jewelled chalices. The guests recline.

Sedately slow they send the chased cups round,

But quaff no worse for absence of much sound.

"Blood, blood it is ye put to traitor lips !"

A strange voice shrieks. With lightning-swift eclipse

All flames are quenched, save that which strangely burns

From the death-chamber. There two vast bronze urns

Spout from the gorge a vivid 'poisonous light :

And in the door-way, draped in glistening white,

Nitocris stands. Aghast they backward fall :

Some beat the door, some 'neath the benches crawl.

There stood she in the glare with that still smile

They fathomed now, and spake one word—"The Nile."

A sound of creaking flood-gates, then a roar

Like thousand surges on an iron shore.

They draw bright steel and rush on her, but she
Beside one urn of flame stood steadfastly,
And, ere the first hand raised to kill came nigher,
Plunged without cry amid the molten fire.



RHODOPIS.



R IPE apple-hued, a damsel sweet,
I see thee go with jangling feet
Adown the streets of Naucratis :
The people part to let thee by,
And swart-browed youths, half bold, half shy,
Slip jewels in thy hand to buy
A soft embrace, a burning kiss.

With ruddy cheek and straight Greek nose,
With temples flushed by many a rose
That crowned thy hair in Naucratis,
A favoured guest, nor last nor least,
In raiment gold decked out for feast
Thou trippest, and the dainty priest
Takes not thy frank young smile amiss.

Then, with no secret cult adored,
Thou sittest queen-like at the board,
 Crowned and a queen in Naucratis ;
And flute-girls dance to piping sound,
And goes the wooden image round :
"Too short is life for pleasure found,"
 It says ; "put by no proffered bliss."

Dost still remember, truly tell,
That monster tame who loved thee well
 Ere yet thou camst to Naucratis,—
A monster with a poet's mind,
Who often kissed thy wild eyes blind,
Slaves of one lord, to him less kind,
 Poor Æsop, than to thee, I wis.

And canst thou call those brows to mind,
Where laurel with the myrtle twined,
 Scarce like the girls of Naucratis !
Sister of that thy master young,
Who lashed him with the noblest tongue
And lips, that ever kissed or sung,
 Sappho the Lesbian poetess.

In mellow Greek wine trafficked he,
Which brought him gold, the gold bought thee,
 As yet unknown to Naucratis,
The city where your sisters sway,
The fairest in the world, they say.
She served your queen another way,
 That high imperious heart, than this.

Hadst thou not years before been dead,
Perchance, too, stretched on festal bed
 Drinking rich wine in Naucratis,
Thou might'st have marked a stranger mild,
Curious-credulous as a child,
Whom the priests fed with lies, and smiled—
 Perchance he would have craved a kiss.

Herodotus, I think, his name,
A travelling news-monger, the same
 Who far enough from Naucratis
Behind an altar saw them piled,
Those iron spits, thine offering styled,
In days when virtue less reviled,—
 The tithe of all thy properties.

He looked on them with genial eye,
He passed not, gaze averted, by,
Nor did the priests in Naucratis !
This tenth of all that thou didst own !
Then not sufficient this alone
To build that mountain vast of stone
Men called the harlot's pyramis.

Ah ! didst thou live in these dull days,
Where would they be, the pride, the praise
That soothed thy shame in Naucratis ?
Instead should be reproaches foul,
The maiden's blush, the matron's scowl,
A priest to curse, a mob to howl,
A serpent in thy heart to hiss.



AT ROME.

DEATH-PALE the night waxes, and, red as in
birth

While the young dawn comes forth from her wan
mother-earth,

Saffron-stained is the close-curtained couch of the
east :

Now heavy sleep severs the light lips of mirth,
And the rose-garlands fade with the fast-failing
feast,

And the weak mourning woman with red scalded
eyes

Sees the last star go out and the first lights
arise,

As she sits among ashes upon the cold hearth,
The fettered soul weeping the soul new released.

"Queen Nature has dealt thee a lordlier dower
Than the peaches or passion-bloom clasping thy
bower.

All the rills in thy temples are purple and fine
Like the delicate fibres that meet in a flower,
Or the slender blue veins that cross over and
twine,

Ever beautiful flaws in the marble's white heart
Though they baffle and blemish the sculptor's fair
art,

Or as rivulets viewed from a far-off watch-tower,
Or the thread-like thin tendrils that curl on the
vine.

"The faint odours of jasmine come in with the
dawn ;

The sweet oleander shrubs flower on the lawn ;
The trees put forth foliage, bronze, green, and
gold ;

And among and about them is grazing the fawn ;
The silver-grey ash shivers not with the cold,
For the morning is warm as the throb in thy
breast,

And the hot winds are panting with feverish un-
rest ;

Summer-snow at the rose-root the rose-leaves lie
 strawn,
And the red rose is opening fold after fold.

“The striped tiger-lily expands, and unfurls
Its orange vermilion-speckled curls ;
With clusters of carmine the palace walls glow ;
The myrtle-buds glitter like delicate pearls ;
The fruit trees are sprinkled with prosperous snow ;
And grapes hang in bunches of emerald fire
To kindle our cups with the juice of desire,
When the flutes and the dances of soft-singing
 girls
May awake in my bosom the heart's ebb and flow.

“The chased silver flagons and patens outspread
The rich wine in the chalice of gold at my head,
From one to the other are flashing the morn
Through the rose-light and perfume that round us
 are shed,
And the painted Madonnas look haggard and worn
In their round aureoles ; but the white Venus there
Takes the colour of youth from the crimsoning air,
As Pygmalion marvelled to see her wax red,
And a goddess of flesh from the marble was born.

Take a draught, lady mine, of the good tears of
Christ

From this gold-bottomed goblet so daintily spiced,
That thy veins may throb fuller and flush thy pale
cheek.

Though it chills the clear metal with cool waves
well iced,

It can thrill with new life-throb the languid and
weak.

I would drink from thy lips the red blush it will
raise,

And draw through thy blood into mine the sweet
blaze ;

For the lust of old age must be charmed and
enticed—

I would change key and crosier with youth for a
week !

“ It is good, is it not ? to be loved of a Pope ;
For when all common sinners are damned, as I
hope,

I shall head my procession, good lemans and all,
And sweep up to heaven with crook, mitre, and
cope ;

And the angels shall come and shall go at my call,

While with swinging of censers and singing of mass
From my proud marble monument homeward I
pass ;

For the gate to the keys of St. Peter must ope,
And the bars at the touch of Christ's vicar must
fall.



THE LOVED OF APOLLO.

BEFORE the pine log's blaze she sits
Within her oaken-panelled hall :

Each living ember redly flits

O'er blazoned roof and carven wall.

Each marble square beneath the grate

Gives back a sanguine tongue of fire,

The diamonds on her breast dilate,

Red glows her ruby-cinctured tiar.

" Men hate a woman passion-proof

Like all that proves their wisdom vain :

Then let them curse my father's roof,

And swear his child has suffered stain,

Whereby she fears her maiden snows

Might blackly 'neath the sunshine thaw,

And so lets fade her maiden rose

To screen what worm hath wrought the flaw.

*

“God knows, ’tis not their scorn I fear,
’Tis I their shape and stature scorn,
Who have not seen my beauty’s peer
In any man of woman born.
They call me callous, wrought of stone—
Sweet Heavens, I would that he were not,
But rosy flesh and human bone,
And life-blood coursing wild and hot.

“Lo! there he stands within his niche,
A god in every line and fold,
The stone locks clustering close and rich
Upon his head’s divinest mould.
White-armed he wings his wrath from far,
Poised forward on one sandalled sole :
His spirit swifter than a star
Outspeeds the arrow to its goal.

“Most strange that it should bind me so,
This marble mass of soulless limb,
That more and more I seem to grow
Incarnate piece and part of him ;
For all my youth and childhood through
’Twas ever thus as now : by day

His eyes my restless steps pursue ;
At eve I clasp his feet to pray.

“ I marvel not that pagan seers
Should hold this archer-youth a god,
Since though our Lady squints and leers,
Men kiss the ground her feet have trod ;
And now, though mute his holy place ;
Though dead their creed while ours be new,
The worship of the wiser race
When all is done may yet be true.

“ I dream ! He clasps me in his arms,
And stabs me with the lips of love :
To rosy flesh the marble warms,
His curls like sunset gleam above.
Sweet life—he breathes upon my cheek :
Sweet love—he fills my soul with power :
Sweet sleep—his lips begin to speak :
Sweet death—he kills me like a flower.”

That night a prince came o'er the snow :
To him the king his child had sworn ;
The priest awaits with book below :
Her maidens haste the bride to warn.

The door swings open with a gust,
And lo, an empty breadth of floor !
The statue crumbled into dust,
The lady gone for evermore.



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

TOUCH me not: look not on me: I am
changed,

Changed much since yesternight, and now estranged

From all this world, its vanities, and thee.

I sought to love thee with a soul set free

By one fierce throe from bondage. I have found
God's chain too strong, have spurned it, but am
bound.

Thou may'st recall our early love, the house

Low lying, and the bower of woven boughs.

The throbbing of birds' notes that came all day

From the near woods and hillsides far away.

Thou may'st remember one small corner, grown

With lilies of the valley, named my own,

And how thine eyes would weep on it sweet tears

(Thus much thy lips confessed in after years)

For love of me, that love like music's pain
Which thrills young souls ere passion come to
stain

With wild desires the thirst for kindred soul,
To swell the pride, to dim the heavenly goal.
Thou may'st remember that red passion-flower
Which robed in summer time our shady bower,
And how we used to watch its growth, and praise
The nails, the twelve apostles, and the rays
Of issuing glory, and marvel why God gave
This manifest symbol of His love to save
And those sweet sufferings thou and I had read,
To a far country where but heathen bred,
Till our good mariners should fetch it thence
In Christian souls to kindle penitence,
And how we pored together o'er that book
So full of marvels in the ivied nook,
The poverty of good Ignatius,
And seven sleeping youths of Ephesus,
And those sweet birds, that, by St. Francis' voice
Taught in the holy legends to rejoice,
To north, east, south, and west in legions four
The joyful tidings to all countries bore,
Till all the feathered birds of every clime
Made all the woods with blessed music chime :

Ah yes, thou dost remember, and that day
Canst yet recall, when thou and I at play,
A boy and girl no more, with sudden sighs
Paused suddenly, and in each other's eyes
Gazed with a long and aching look of pain ;
Our lips shuddered, and thou, with long long
strain,

Didst draw me to thee, and I panted there
In frightened joy, but well content to share
The broad folds of thy mantle, and we lost
All memory of all things round almost.
I kissed your eyes, and they were wet, and through
The lids, as my lips clove to them and grew,
One heavy tear broke with a sudden gush ;
You clasped me closer, and with burning blush
I broke away, and fled, and wept all night
For joy and fear of my new-found delight.

Then came with time the bitter change which
broke

The two hearts grown to one at one sheer stroke,
Thou o'er the seas, I pledged by needy sire
To wed a rich old man, the first love's fire
Still burning as a lamp unseen may shine
Within the precinct of a secret shrine.

What nights were mine with tears instead of sleep !
And how my sire would bid me cease to weep,
And crave the cause with querulous wrath of age,
Or seek with querulous kindness to assuage !
Then, all the secret known, he cursed his child,
For once as with unwonted look he smiled
Upon me, I took courage ; and with shame,
With choking tears between, the scarce words
came.

I spoke of you, and bit by bit he knew
All, all, and from his lips hot curses flew.
He cast me within convent cloisters, where
Till two nights since in penitence and prayer
And bitter tears and fasts I spent the days.
'Twas but an hour before I saw thy face
This second time, and heard again thy voice,
That I 'twixt world and world had made my
choice,

And donned the holy veil, and breathed the vows,
That made me God's elect and Christ's own
spouse ;

But when I heard thee, saw thee, knew thee well,
I felt all Hell rise up, my soul rebel
And curse at God, for I was mad, and thou,
Why, thou wast changed since last I kist thy brow.

There was a proud hard look upon thy face,
And scorn was in thy lips. The holy place
With impious daring thou hadst broken through,
And all my blood like thine that moment grew :
I tore the veil, and trampled it, I heard
The organ wed with many a holy word,
And mocked the chant, and leapt to thee, and
cried
That I would walk the world o'er at thy side.

So then we fled together, and thy steed
Parted the winds of night with thunder-speed :
We passed low granges in the dim of dawn,
And many a wood and many a river-lawn,
And ever and anon with sudden sweep
We came in sight of glimpses of the deep,
And far, far out among the waves and gales
Saw rocks, and snowy sea-birds, and white sails ;
And I, who never saw the sea before,
Forgot my fear in joy, and clung the more
To thee, and laughed, and throbbed with a new
life,
That turned all blood in me to sudden strife,
And nearer pressed to thine my aching form,
And caught through all my limbs a tingling storm.

Through other sleeping hamlets on we sped,
Startling from dreams full many a sleeping head ;
By swamps, and rocks, and bridges, and beneath
Beheld the brown swoln torrents curl and
seethe ;

By castles with long linden avenues,
And lakes that mirrored many golden views ;
By glades where elm and beech a shadow wove,
By here a citron, there an orange grove ;
And then I felt no terror such as this
But only the old love, the throbbing kiss
Upon my neck, the salt wind in my hair,
The steed's swift motion and the warm bright
air.

Then with a turning of the road we came
In full view of the sea, one broad deep flame
Of blue and amber with its thrilling flow
Of fiery ripples and its surf of snow.
There stood the clustered sails, and ere the night,
I saw above our heads like wings of light
White snows of shivering canvas, as we fled.

Then with the sinking sun the waves grew red,
And you with whispers low won all my soul.
Outside the plank we heard waves beat and roll

With long swift gurgle and with sudden splash,
Felt the ship thrill, when some strong surge would
dash

Against the prow, heard timbers creak and groan,
And tramping steps o'erhead. And we alone
Felt deeper storm and music than the sea's,
The swell of infinite tides of strife and ease,
And I for once, so strong, was passion's spell,
Thought it were sweet to share with thee fierce
Hell.

My soul, I knew, in every burning kiss
Drank in damnation, but rejoiced in this :
And hot blood thronging through each swollen vein
Burned out all fear from my bewildered brain.
So sped the ship all night long miles of sea,
A night of fiery ecstasies, and we,
Forgetful of things past, both good and ill,
Of love's incestuous chalice drank our fill.
Then dawn arose, and in that weak thin light
Deep burned thine eyes, thy cheek looked deadly
white,

And thy lips famished, and I saw thee shrink
From my pale aspect too, and thy look sink.
And hot tears broke from me, but as they fell
Thy lips rained kisses, and each kiss was Hell,

And I in great fear but in stronger bliss
Clasped thee with sobs and gave thee kiss for kiss,
And swooned away in pain, and knew no more.

Then to this isle we came, and strongly swore
Truth beyond death and on this side of it,
And lived with love in sweet embraces knit.
But last night, when soft calm had lulled the storm
And thy strong arms unloosed my heavy form,
And heavy sleep sank on my lids, and sealed
The lashes in oblivion, I beheld
The holy Virgin standing at my side.
Her cheeks were stained with tears, eyes open
wide

With a blank look more terrible than aught
Of wrath or scorn, with strange foreboding fraught.
So she stood motionless, it seemed an hour,
And I, with creeping flesh, sustained the power
Of that most awful look, and my eyes ached
In bursting sockets, and like palsy quaked
Each limb of all my body, and at last
Her lips stirred, and there came no lightning-blast,
But quiet, fearful words, distinct and cold,
At which my heart seemed severed fold by fold

And plucked to bits, as maidens pluck a bloom
Petal by petal, words not of death's doom,
Nor yet of penal fire (which I had borne),
But awful alienation, holy scorn,
Eternal desolation and despair,
Outlawry without privilege of prayer,
Continual execration, solitude,
A soul to deep self-scorn undying food.
And so she melted silently, and I
Awoke just now with that unnatural cry
You heard and told me of : nay, touch me not :
Let all things now between us rest forgot.
My soul is doomed, yet would not wish undone
The sin that blasted it : ages may run,
They cannot bring more grief than that was
bliss.

I dread no punishment but only this,
The repetition of such deadly wrong.
Do thou remember now thy whole life long
That, though by strongest love to sin enticed,
Yet am I sealed the eternal bride of Christ.
Remember this, and let us rather strive
Each one to save the other's soul alive ;
And this may be, that holy deed and gift
And direst penances and frequent shrift,

That these and years of purgatorial pain
May purge some portion of the eternal stain,
And thou and I at the last hour may stand
Purged of all passions, holy, hand in hand,
And each may gladly say, with bended knee,
Behold my God, the soul I bring to thee.



TO A PICTURE.

SWEET face like starlight's slumb'rous haze
Soft sleeping on some sobbing lake,
Sinks on my soul thy nestling gaze
Like swoon, or snow, which flake on flake
Descends where glowed but late the virgin rose,
And locks her gold-brown leaves undreaming in
repose.

As odours in the sultry noon
From heath-bloom where the wild bee gloats,
As sounds of their own sweetness swoon,
Whose wings o'erweighed with honeyed notes
Within the breast of downy silence glide
And in her petals warm their precious burden hide :

So seems thy languorous soul to fail
In light intense of those deep eyes,

*

Dreaming to death like evening gale
Or wave that all its being sighs
Forth to the winds upon some distant shore
Of silver-girdled isles where grief may be no more.

As lures each star the nightingale,
Till overthongs their myriad swarm
The hive of heaven, ere sunset pale
Subsides from day's caresses warm :
As mellow peaches tempt the starling nigh,
Or honey-suckle flowers the peacock-butterfly :

As fresher pastures far entice
Upon green slope or daisied lawn
The browsing flock ; or that sweet spice
Bright birds of Eden oft hath drawn
To taste the luscious fruit that poisoneth :
So draw me on enchanted and fed by thee with
death.



AFTER-THOUGHT.



A DAY'S delight becomes the dream of years,
Like furrows left of unforgotten streams,
By whose abandoned path the spirit hears

Their former voice as music heard in dreams,
And sees their thronging ripples, for they made
The wilderness to blossom, and it seems

To blossom with their memory, arrayed
In light and laughter ; so on this faint breast
A cherished bloom abides which may not fade

Though leafless, and its perfume fills my rest,
Instilling drop for drop with opiate sleep
Keen love into the panting heart oppressed

On which it lies like sea-moss on the deep—
And yet no rose it is, but one past hour,
Which like a frightened dove delights to creep

Close up to me, and nestling down to cower

 All trembling in my bosom : and I feel
A seraph winged in Heaven, or as a flower

May feel when sun and rain alternate seal

 Her petals in sweet slumber, question-wrought
If o'er another's soul such glory steal.—

And thou, my dream's companion, nightly brought

 By slumber's winged minions to my side,
Deem not that in the echo of my thought

The voice of our past joy may be belied

 With shade of sorrow : rather it returns
Subdued and softened, stilled and sanctified.

Nay, by its after-thought all pleasure learns

 Its value, and for that sweet kiss though past
Not every world that in night's concourse burns

Were recompense.—I hold my treasure fast

Till old delight by new be banished and surpassed.

THE SAME STARS.



A FAR from thee my spirit faints
Beneath the streaked and chequered dawn,
When twilight first with saffron paints
Long mountain-slope and river-lawn,
Till from some deep and ruby rift
The spirit-throngs of morning crowd,
And down one flood of glory drift
Day's pilot-barques of kindled cloud :
And ambient mists on nimble plumes
Come forth in gold and amber dyes,
As each the unrisen sun illumines
Brighter than birds of Paradise.
But when swart evening starry-eyed
Has gemmed with tears the lashes dark
Of wintry fern in clefts that hide
Where none their faded bloom may mark,

L

And when those pale and holy fires
Whose seraph hosts at morn disperse,
Once more unite their solemn choirs
While night reveals the Universe :
Then seems my soul no more alone,
But cries, " Where'er my path may be
On hills her feet have never known,
The same stars look on her and me."



TO CECILIA.

BY the pure spirit in each gaze revealed,
Which from thine eyelid's heavy-fringed recess
Like those pale fires the meadow-grasses shield,
Subdues the sense, when star-beams mild caress
The heavy odours from the jasmine flowers
Whose influence of love each swooning gale o'er-
powers ;

By the fair locks, which, like in form and dye
To flecks of golden cloud when day has set,
Clasp the calm twilight of thy brow ; and by
The soft sweet smile half mingled with regret
Like rippling moonlight on an endless sea,
Which seems to lead the gaze into eternity ;

I pray thee tell what secret whisperings
The elves that dwell in the moon's quivering
beams

Have spoken to thee when their viewless wings
Have brushed thy soothèd temples into dreams,
Or whence hath sprung amid earth's wilderness
The secret fountain-head of so much loveliness.



THE SPIRIT-VOICE.



OVER the purple silence of the sea
Paven with amber, under tremulous night
Flooded with moon-beams, came a song to me :
And the mute waves pursued the phantom-flight
Of that lone voice unutterably sweet,
And brake with scarce a murmur at my feet.

It seemed an exiled soul from Paradise,
Whose beauty made the enamoured winds to
swoon,
Wafted 'twixt silver seas and azure skies
Among those gold-winged spirits of the moon
Whose glittering track across the waters dark
Still follows, dream-like, the beholder's barque.

And then it faded into one long sigh,
Which passed and perished in forgetfulness,

Though still it dwells, a shapeless memory,
Which not the subtlest music can express—
A moment's converse caught with gods above,
The pure ideal of an early love.



IMMORTAL BELOVED.



THE MUSICIAN'S DEATH.

THE ocean seemed calling, the white billows
falling,

The thunder-cloud gleaming, the albatross scream-
ing ;

A tumult of dreaming was poured in his ears,
And ever the sounds became faster and faster,
And swelled the blue veins in the hands of the
master,

And wet were the keys with his tears.

And the sounds seemed to tingle, and gather, and
mingle,

In a halo of tender inscrutable splendour,
Like the pale clouds that wander by night o'er the
moon,

While he heard his own heart through the melody
throbbing,
And the breath from his bosom came broken and
sobbing,
Like the cry of a virgin aswoon.

And the glory came nearer, and softer, and clearer,
A spirit of Eden, in form like a maiden,
And o'er the world-laden stood peaceful and dumb,
And he raised his eyes, bright with the wild light
of fever,
And shrieked, "I have found her for once and for-
ever!
Immortal Belovèd, I come."



THE VENTURESOME.

AN ALLEGORY.



'TWAS one of the blossoms of Paradise
That smiled on a mountain's brink,
And lit with the lure of an angel's eyes
The quaking path in the empty skies,
Where the wild goats pause and shrink.

There came a maiden out of her bower :
Oh but her eyes were bright !
She hath fixed their gaze on the innocent flower,
And her peace is fled in a single hour
For the wish of a new delight.

"'Tis the fairest flower I have seen," she cried,
"Though many a flower be fair :
What matter though mother and father would chide?
The old are dull, and the path is wide :
How sweet it would show in my hair !"

It beckons her on with a strange delight,
For its petals are white as snow :
She reaches to it with a blinded sight :—
It smiles, as of old, on the perilous height,
She lies in the vale below.



THE STORM-GOD.



WHAT sees the lady below the tide?
Faint her smile as the fitful sea,
For her dreams be of him that shall call her his
bride

In the far lands nigh unto Araby :
And the mariner rough as he steers in her sight,
Exults in the pride of a trust so fair.
But the Storm-god, passing alone that night,
Fell sick unto death of her flaxen hair,
Sick of the light in her hazel eyes,
And sick of her flaxen hair.

Then the winds sprang up, and the surges arose,
And fell each over other in foam and wrath,
But the good ship cleft through their whirlwind of
snows
For her and the maiden an onward path,

And was glad, as she leaned to the speed of her
flight,

So gentle a thing through the tempest to bear ;
But the Storm-god stooped in the thick of the
night,

And was quenched of his thirst for her flaxen
hair,

Drank of the light in her hazel eyes,

And was quenched of her flaxen hair.

Then he smote the ship with his heavy hand,

And shattered to splinters her masts and spars,
And the stout planks, loosened from bolt and band,

Lay scattered abroad by the reefs and bars,
While he bore her alone in the black of the cloud,

Alone in the red of the lightning's glare,
And made for her bosom a silken shroud

Of the tangled threads of her flaxen hair ;
For he saw death smile in her hazel eyes,

And death in her flaxen hair.

And the people that dwell on the Afric coast,

Down by the brink of the burning sea,
Are smitten with fear through their swarthy host,
And quake and tremble exceedingly ;

And the wise men are singing of famine and dearth
If none of the tribe at his peril shall dare
To lift her that is not a woman of earth
But a spirit of beauty with starry hair,
With the light of the sea in her great wild eyes,
And the sea in her starry hair.

But they bend around by the barren shore,
And worship the wraith in the windless wave,
Which, turning the white arms o'er and o'er,
Is banking about her a golden grave :
Till a stern swart devil of battle-grips
Has raised her with reverent wondering care,
And brushes the froth from her angel lips
And the coral stems from her flaxen hair :
But he died of the light in her hazel eyes
And the touch of her flaxen hair.



THE KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN HELM.



I RIDE on a steed of Arab breed
With hurricane speed afar ;
Like the lightning's glance my silver lance,
My sword like a falling star ;
A sun on my targe at the morning's marge,
In my beaver a sprig of elm ;
And shouts reply when the heralds cry
The knight of the golden helm.

I wear no glove for a lady's love,
No scarf of Persian loom ;
But they know my blade with its silver shade,
And my armour's golden gloom,
And the sapphire gem in my diadem,
Where the rays like moonlight bask,
And the galleries sigh, as I canter by,
'Tis the knight of the golden casque.

I stand at the list like a hawk on the fist
Or a golden bird of prey,
Then sudden stoop with a radiant swoop,
And bear the foe away ;
In the swift careers of the shattered spears
I charge and overwhelm,
And the lords of the field to the barriers yield
For the knight of the golden helm.

I traverse the world like a storm unfurled.
And strike the tyrant down ;
From land to land with gauntleted hand
I shatter the cross and crown ;
From place to place none see my face
Made bare of the brazen mask ;
None know my name but they quake at the fame
Of the knight of the golden casque.

None know my voice, nor the love of my choice,
Nor the land from whence I come,
But I carry the weight of God and Fate
Implacable and dumb ;
In silent might like a famine's blight
I sweep through every realm,
Like a pestilence of Omnipotence,
I, the knight of the golden helm.

Perched on my head sit blood and dread,
And my sword knows not the sheath,
But I sit and smile in my helm the while
With an angel face beneath ;
I keep my course with a ruthless force,
And I do my stated task ;
But love has a throne in the heart unknown
Of the knight of the golden casque.



THE VALLEY OF DEVILS.

DOWN in a valley of gems in the utmost recess
of the Indies,

Flashing with torrents, and vocal with voices of
waters that fell,

Of violent waters that fell,

Surging, and seething, and storming like foam
from the base of the Andes,

Turbid with gold, with the dust of fine gold in
their fire-coloured swell,

Like the gold gleams that cloud the clear amber,
and faint with a violet smell,

Glittered the whiteness of limbs, and re-echoed
the murmur of voices,

The whiteness of revelling houris, the murmur of
voices that sang,

Of musical voices that sang,

Singing at sound of whose sweetness the wanderer
rests and rejoices,
Faint with the opiate swoon of a dream-love, and
stung with the pang,
With the terror and love for the serpent which
lures the frail dove to his fang.

And I passed on a ledge of the crags and looked
over the dizzy dim verges,
Looked on the rounded white flanks and the
tangles of moon-coloured hair,
On the storm-tost loose tangles of hair,
On the shoulder's rich swell, and the side's silver
sweep, and the breast's snowy surges,
And shuddered, and sickened, and swooned with
the giddy sweet wine of despair,
With the drowsy sweet wine of a sadness at things
too ineffably fair ;

And I sank in among them aswoon with desire to
make one of their revels,
But all gone were the swan-like deep breasts ; and
with whispering serpents I lay,
Amid clammy wet serpents I lay,

And I weltered all night in their spires, all that
night in the valley of devils,
At the sound of their voices aghast, to the slime
of their poisons a prey,
Which not all the waves of the ocean shall wash
from my spirit away.



TILL JUDGMENT DAY.



AN ARABESQUE.

THEY set her down on her early bier,
And the women wept around.
“For the love of my soul,” quoth the priest, “I
fear
To lay her in holy ground.”
“O holy Father,” the mother cried,
“What secret is known to thee?
They shall lay me soon by the dear girl’s side,
Wherever her place may be.”

There rode a stranger up to the door,
And alighted in hottest haste;
He flung himself on the bier, and swore
There was never a maid so chaste.

“ I shall sleep with her, the live with the dead,
In the earth we shall be one :
You must nail me down in her grave,” he said,
“ For the ill that I have done.”

They nailed him down in the grave with her,
And thrice on the nails they smote,
But they heard nor struggle within, nor stir,
Save the death-rattle in his throat.
They listened long on the coffin-lid,
But the dying lips were dumb ;
And none shall ever his love forbid
Till the Day of Judgment come.



ELFRIDA.



AN ARABESQUE.

SHE came down to the shore and cried :
It seemed the mad waves paused to hear ;
A mad wind rose and echoed loud :
Shrank from her feet the surf aside ;
Gathered white wings from far and near,
And spread above a shrieking crowd :

The surf was cloven out at sea :
Came floating o'er the waves a shape
With wings : red lightnings went before,
Across the dark came white waves three ;
The mountains wore a cloudy cape :
A black storm rose and onward bore.

Elfrida opes her soft white arms,
But turns her face in fear away ;

All night her thirsting lips are kissed,
A touch of fire her bosom warms ;
She staggers home at break of day
With two blue marks on either wrist.

Ere long she fell on deadly plight
That all who saw were well aware
She struggled with some monstrous birth.
They called a priest one stormful night ;
None know what thing it was she bare :
They slew and hid it under earth.



TO BEATRICE.



. . . . "then he left me
And gave himself to others" . . .

.
.

"Such depths he fell that all device was short
Of his preserving save that he should view
The children of perdition."

—CAREY'S *Dante, Purgatory*, Canto xxx.

I.

TO-DAY I called thy face up from the grave,
The grave of grief where I had buried it,
And with old threads of memory newly knit
The features sweet that made my soul a slave.

The noble courtesy that never gave
Too little or too much, the smiles that flit
O'er marble brows like a fair poem writ,
The clear Greek face a sculptor's hand might grave.

Then swift I felt a keen and piercing pain ;
As he who, bitten of the serpent's fang,
A moment stood, and straight to ashes fell ;

Or like those others 'neath the scalding rain
And sleet of fire the Tuscan poet sang,
Lying upon the "burning marl" of Hell.

II.

There too the poet marked a fiery snake
Transfix a spirit with a sudden stroke :
Flat lay the worm, while the wound spouted
smoke,
And each eyed each, as gazing ne'er would slake.

Then 'gan each several limb of him to quake,
And a most hideous change in each awoke,
And slowly o'er their vital members broke,
As changes o'er a ghastly vision break,

For the snake rose up, as the man fell down,
Branched into legs and blossomed forth with
ears :

The man that was fled hissing in a trice.

*

Tuscan, my heart confirms thy truth's renown,
That kissing serpents changed to one appears,
Like virtue with long gazing upon vice.



LOVE DEFERRED.

WOULD that I ne'er had clasped that breast,
Nor caught from it contagious fire !
It is a spring of fierce unrest,
A furnace live of mad desire.

My days are a perpetual pain,
And scarce I dare to sleep by night,
But brooding o'er the fire remain
Till almost breaks the morning light ;

Then early from a death-like sleep
Arise again to pine and brood,
And vainly yearn once more to weep,
As in my childhood's days I could.

In vain the torture sweet I spurn
For toil which now no pleasure yields :

Red embers in my bosom burn,
And drive me to the streams and fields.

And there with aimless wandering gait
I totter ghost-like to and fro,
And back return in darkness late
When none my reddened lids may know.

I grow dark-cheeked and hollow-eyed,
My stature straight begins to bend ;
But scorn of man the wound would hide,
And still shall hide it to the end.

I cannot talk, or laugh, or jest,
And hear not what around is said ;
A weary languor numbs my breast,
I wish myself insane or dead.

The sense is lost of right and wrong :
Thy virtue is my bitter death.
Yet would I not my days prolong,
Since but thine arms can save my breath.

THREE SONNETS.



I.

THE foul frog buried in the marsh and mire
Croaks all night long 'neath the immaculate
star :

May I not then lift eyes and voice afar,
Winged to thy feet with chaste adoring fire ?

I dream of thee sweet dreams that never tire,
Though the great gulf of heaven my passage
bar,

And wide as worlds asunder lie we are,—
Perchance I would not wish thy presence nigher.

Man may not see divinity too near,
Poisons with hopes and fears all loveliest things,
Stains with blood-offerings base the holiest
shrine.

But I will sing of thee 'twixt tear and tear,
As with the dew and day-star on his wings
Sweet Heine sang the palm-tree and the pine.

II.

Lo, some young aspirant on winds of hope
Springs from the earth upon a boundless flight,
Voyaging towards the morning and the light,
And sings his soul out under heaven's wide cope.

But, once the sunrise gates refuse to ope
A path to lightning wings that cleave and smite,
Lower and lower, spirit-broken quite,
He drops down, in the misty vales to grope.

And I, poor wonderer, lifted eyes afar,
And swooned with glory, and winnowed the wild
air,
Singing, and soaring up and up to thee.

So when at highest I failed to touch thy star,
Down, down, down, drunk with sin and with
despair,
I sank, and grovelled in the riotous sea.

III.

One said unto a statue, "Thou art mine.
Silver and gold and corals have I thrown
Into the balance, and thou art mine own
To stand forever in my temple's shrine.

"Yet my blood foams not at thy sight like wine,
But aches with dull despair e'en to the bone,
For who may wed with pure impassive stone?
In vain, in vain for me thou art divine.

"Mine art thou, yet thou art not mine at all,
Thou art remoter than the utmost deep;
Two solitudes we are that yearn apart."

I thank the gulf set 'twixt us, and the wall,
The sea, the laws of man, since less I weep
The greater gulf of sin 'twixt heart and heart.



TO A BUTTERFLY.



I.

RESTLESS, pathless, hither, thither,
Taste of joy while yet you may :
Buds may bloom, and blooms may wither,
Thou art shorter-lived than they ;
Kissing 'mong the purple heather,
In the pleasant summer weather,
Live and love while it is day.

II.

From the peaceful bent to borrow
Peace, thyself possessing none,
Finding beauty, leaving sorrow,
Seen when maiden morn is cheerful,

Flitting on the cloudy morrow
From the blossoms bent and tearful,
Wildly wooed and scorned when won,
O'er new vales to seek new pleasure,
Teach the winds a mirthful measure,
Dancing till the day be done.

III.

Now I see thee lightly settle
On a bent Petunia petal,
Snatch from joy a moment's rest,
Part and leave the sprays a-tremble
Which thy fairy feet have pressed ;
Upward, upward, mounting, soaring,
Creature of a day's adoring,
Fervent, fickle, faithless lover,
Still I watch thee pause and hover ;
Loiter, hesitate, dissemble ;
Stoop to lavish hid caresses
Through Laburnum's golden tresses ;
Sip the lips of ruddy roses
Blushing 'neath the sun that blesses ;
Taste the Lily's dainty whiteness,

Where in snowy sleep she dozes
Heedless of approaching brightness ;
Sink oppressed among the leaves,
Where the gentle violet weaves
Meek enchantments, fragrant spells,
Breathings with which beauty quells ;
Court the hyacinth sedate ;
Dip into the foxglove bells ;
All thy thirst with beauty sate,
Then again to heaven dart,
Fluttering like a maiden's heart.

IV.

What ! away so soon ? Thy splendour
Fades above me, bright pretender ;
Where the lilac bloom is highest
Like a winged thought thou fliest,
Gathering from life's bitterness
All of sweet its charms possess.
Free from care thy spirit ranges
Through a life of little hours,
Brief and bright and full of changes.
Oh that such a fate were ours !

Fancy sickens in her musing :
Longing love a slave would be :
Pleasures cloy in too long using :
I would learn to live like thee.



HAREBELL IN THE HEATHER.



(AFTER GOETHE, AND TO SCHUBERT'S MUSIC.)

BLITHE are maids thy bloom to greet,
Harebell in the heather ;
For young lovers, wont to meet
Whispering low in twilight sweet,
Press on thee together,
And thy droop betrays their feet
Harebell in the heather.

If she come again at eve,
Harebell in the heather,
In thy cup one tear receive
Just to prove a heart can grieve
Faithless altogether :
They should weep who dare deceive,
Harebell in the heather.

THE DEAD FLOWER.



MAGDALEN TO HER SISTER.

SHE is gone out of sight, out of mind ;
There is none the remembrance to keep
Of the flowers blown away by the wind—
Poor, sweet, desolate flower, let her sleep :
I am left, and I only, to weep.

She was fair, she was sweet, she was pure,
If to love with the whole heart be so ;
She is gone, for she could not endure
The scoff and the gibe and the blow :—
There is scarcely a soul that will know.

To lack gold is to be but a slave,
For I loved her, and nightly must see
How men bargained to keep from the grave
The dear life that was all things to me,
And I burned for one hour to be free.

Well, no more she shall thirst now, nor fast,
And she feels not the sin and the shame,
And my heart when it breaks at the last
Shall be found writ in fire with her name,
And on man, and on God be the blame.



THE DAY OF DREAMS.



I.

EACH mountain's snowy bosom feels
 Young Spring's dissolving glow ;
And wide the waveless river steals .
 In silent peace below,
Through velvet meads and flowerful vales,
 Where browsing cattle be ;
And scarcely kissed by gentle gales,
 The blue and crystal sea,
With here and there a sail unfurled,
 Like dove-wings white in space,
Spreads dimly to the spirit-world
 Where Earth and Heav'n embrace ;
Like purple of deep-vaulted night
 When hanging vapours lift,

And clouds of snow, like clouds of light,
Across the moon may drift ;
Like some interminable sweep
Of lightly ruffled grass,
Where pasture is for many sheep,
And scattered breezes pass ;
For, faint as smiles that sweetly break
The calm of one who dreams,
Come languid winds, and in their wake
A trace of sorrow seems :
And the white calm, like slumber's bloom,
Profound but transient,
Is streaked with shade, as glow and gloom
In summer glades be blent.

II.

Yet where no winds disturb the trance
No spangling sunbeam shines,
But diamond-pointed ripples dance
Across the deeper lines,
Thus all the waves in dreams which pant
Two tints of Eden clothe,

One pale, one darkly radiant,
But born of beauty both ;
And ocean seems a damsel fair
Below the moon that lies,
Entangled in her black bright hair,
Uplooking to the skies ;
And from that sea a gentle wind
Comes like a dreamer's breath,
Charged with a blessing undefined,
A whisper hushed in death.

III.

My boat lies buried 'mong the weeds
Along the river-side :
'Tis loosed, and through a lane of reeds
Half noiselessly we glide.
The quiet waters with us go ;
The clouds are still on high ;
A maiden on her white pillow
Sleeps not more peacefully ;
Below the keel a gurgling sound
Makes music in my ear ;

The valleys change in form around ;
New hills beyond appear.
The world is love, but nevermore
My soul can taste of bliss,
And yet has known but once before
A sadness sweet as this.

IV.

It was a day which might have been
Born in earth's golden time,
And through a blue and silver sheen
The dawn began to climb ;
The stream lay silver in the sun,
And calm as some dead child ;
Mute were the willows every one,
They wept, while lo ! it smiled ;
And there was one beside me then,
A virgin pure and white,
A shrine, an angel among men,
A Heaven revealed to sight.
This scene of placid loveliness
Wears not a charm so meek

As that which made her glances bless
And tinged her marble cheek ;
And wheresoe'er her footsteps trod
To me was holy ground.
A saint may serve an unseen God,
But I had sought and found.

V.

I stand upon a little isle
With one old turret crowned,
And lovely as a tearful smile
The ocean beams around.
My skiff may kiss the shell-strewn beach,
And tarry till I come,
For sure my sorrow cannot reach
This haunt where grief is dumb.
I hear the lark up in the sky
Make light of my despair,
And many a wingèd melody
Is fluttering in the air ;
While fiercely prone as Titan forms
That stiff in torture died,

The mountains of a thousand storms
Strike heaven on every side,
With here and there a smaller shape,
Glassed in the lucent sea,
Some rocky strand or jutting cape,
As calm as calm can be.

VI.

But breaking now the mute repose
In flocks the sea-birds rise,
Like winter flakes which winds oppose,
And hurl back t'ward the skies ;
And upward still in wailful choirs
They hover o'er my head,
Like taunting ghosts of pure desires
Once felt, forever fled.
Away—I cannot bear the place ;
I cannot bear the sea.
'Tis holy as her own young face,
With not a smile for me.



WHITHER?



WHITHER, whither, whither borne
O'er the great deep tempest-torn?
Far away, oh far away,
While I sleep not night or day.

Dream of an inspired delight
Fled into the dark of night !
Vision of a poet's brain
Gathered back to God again !

Whither, whither, whither borne
O'er the great deep tempest-torn?
Far away, oh far away,
Would that in the grave I lay.

WHO KNOWS?



OH starry tangled hair,
How shall I speak of you ?
A joy, or a despair,
Or wedding of the two ?
Who knows ?
Oh starry tangled hair,
How shall I speak of you ?

Hearts madden at the sight,
And ache with bursting tears,
For pain, or for delight,
Regrets, or hopes, or fears ?
Who knows ?
Hearts madden at the sight,
And ache with bursting tears.

MAZZINI.

A LITTLE child of thrice three years or less,
Walking beside his mother through the town ;
An agèd beggar, weather-worn and brown,
Seated before a church in cold distress :

The child paused wondering at his squalid dress
('Twas his first walk abroad), and, looking down,
With tender pity scanned the withered frown—
Can my glad world contain such loneliness ?

Then to the beggar-man the young child ran,
As 'twere his father crouched by the church door,
Threw arms about his neck and o'er him
bowed :

And to the woman said the agèd man,
" Love well this child, for he shall love the poor,"
And wept, and young Mazzini sobbed aloud.

THE POET AND THE TREE.



UPON a night of moonlight mild
That bare a stormful morn,
A pear-tree and a poet-child
Within one hour were born.

They grew together day by day
In beauty and in power ;
He lisped his earliest song the May
It bore its earliest flower.

* * * *

Then he went forth in strength and pride
To conquer man's cold heart ;
He left the tree his young heart's bride,
And fought his fight apart.

He fought with grief : he quelled despair :
A soul serene and meek ;

But tarnished grew his yellow hair,
And faded was his cheek.

He came again, he found it still
In blossom as of old ;
It struck him with a sudden chill :
He fell down dead and cold.



DEATH-DREAM.



WITH broken emerald gleams the swoln wave
smokes and steams :

The wet shore shines : night shakes with flaming
stars :

Sea-green behind blue peaks day fades in circling
streaks

Which meteors traverse in their shining cars.

The galley slips and slides along these glassy tides,

The air smells faint of lilies and drenched grass :

The sad Dream smiles and steers by noiseless
streams and meres,

I lying in the prow hear no sound pass.

We are going, She and I, beyond earth's sea and sky,

Beyond remembrance and the reach of tears :

The old loves' faces press around me less and less,

Mere spectres fading as the sleep-land nears.

New stars unite their choir in heavens of stranger
fire,

New forms of god and goddess rise to view :
They bathe white breast and limb in waters weird
and dim,

Thin fluid flames with green light filtering
through.

Then one with poppies wreathed hath stooped o'er
me and breathed,

Breathed on me from the flowery verge and said,
This wave is Lethe-wave : this quiet is the grave :
The pilot-dream hath brought thee to the dead.

Then gladly on the bank I stepped and stooped and
drank,

Drank in sea-deep the keen cool quiet stream :
All thirst to sing or weep fell from me in that sleep,
And now I sit 'mid other dreams a dream.



THE RIVER'S PILGRIMAGE.



DOWN hills, along valleys
The waterfalls go,
Through leafy long alleys
Of blossom like snow ;
Their music and thunder
Reverberate under
The green dipping arches, that sway with their flow.

O'er sand, over shingle,
In rhythm and rhyme,
The crisp ripples tingle,
And tinkle, and chime,
Or slide over edges
Of polished rock ledges,
Grown o'er with green mosses, and slippery with slime.

Through dank dripping tunnels
Choked up with lush fern,
In clear silver runnels,
In brawling brown burn,
The waters run onward
To seaward and sunward
With sudden start forward, with tangle and turn,

In boisterous riot,
In sheeny white calm,
Round island and eyot
High tufted like palm,
'Neath hoar mountain ridges,
By forests, through bridges,
Past gardens of Paradise breathing with balm.

With silver gyrations
The swift eddies swirl,
Or in smooth undulations
Unbrokenly curl,
They welter and wallow
In slumberous hollow,
And loud over gravel beds patter and purl.

They loiter and tarry
In sweet shady nooks,
Or boil where they marry
The white water brooks ;
They plunge with a spasm
In crevice and chasm,
And foaming emerge to the heavens' bright looks ;

By castle and manor,
With turrets like fire,
And many a banner
On many a spire ;
By low-lying granges,
With long linden ranges ;
Cathedrals and abbeys, that ring with the
choir,

Where at night the rich casement,
All blazoned with saints,
The wave by the basement
Empurples and paints,
And lights broken and shattered
Like rainbows lie scattered,
And the voice of the organ low murmurs and fairs,

And by day the tall steeple
Hangs mirrored below,
And the priests and the people
Go by to and fro,
And the rude eddies roister
Past convent and cloister
Where in whispering couples the white sisters go ;

By clump, and by cluster
Of hamlets that lie
Serene in the lustre
Of earth and of sky ;
By forges that clamour
With anvil and hammer ;
By cities that echo, and whisper, and sigh ;

By quays where great galleons
Unload the rich bale,
To embark bright battalions
All burning in mail,
Or with broad pennons flaring
And clarions blaring
Drop down unto seaward with snowy white sail ;

Through perilous bridges
On tottering piles,
O'ergrown with grey ridges
Of mouldering tiles,
Where weary winds whistle
O'er ramparts that bristle
With hollow round turrets on bastioned isles ;

And palace-walls fretted
And carved and inlaid,
Wave-worn and wave-wetted,
With slim colonnade,
Where a soft silken sighing,
Like shore waves a-dying,
Slips down the white stairs by the broad balustrade,

And the waves catch the glimmer
Of scarves and of shawls,
And golden hair dimmer
Than starlight that falls,
And flagons that twinkle,
And clatter, and tinkle
In sweet dim recesses of musical halls ;

By dungeons the glory
Of day never stains,
They hear the sad story
Of madmen in chains,
That rave to the lashing
Of wild waters dashing
With measured monotony beating their brains ;

Then out among meadows
They flash and they foam,
Half flecked with sharp shadows,
Or dun with soft gloom,
Where the sunlight impinges
Through prim willow fringes,
Like wan leaves that flit o'er the face of a tomb.

Now hasty, now easy,
Half sadness, half mirth,
Sweet, dappled, and breezy,
And smelling of earth,
Unsullied and simple,
With smile and with dimple,
It burns, the sweet stream, for the far ocean firth ;

And the crumpled pink petal
From fair almond-trees
Will flutter and settle
Like foam on the seas ;
So with many a blossom
Upon its bare bosom
It hastens along by the woodlands and leas.



PALINGENESIA.



BY the banks and verges
The crocus emerges,
And the snow-drop rises, the Spring's first-born ;
Then March flings flowers
In yellow showers,
And the primrose cowers
'Neath the thorn ;

Pale saffron spangles
The brakes and tangles ;
The brims of the rivers burn amber and gold ;
In the marshy stubble
The water-bubble
Trails triple and double
In the cold ;

The cowslip speckles
With scarlet freckles
Her tassel-like bell hanging open below ;
The anemone tosses
O'er dusky mosses
Her starry crosses
Of snow.

Soon, welcome comer,
The odorous Summer
Gorgeous with flower and with fruit will be here,
Ere Harvest blesses
With corn-clad tresses,
And vintage presses
The year.

Thou too, my spirit,
Dost thou inherit
No resurrection from death and dole ?
Ah no, what powers
Shall wake, what showers,
Once nipped, the flowers
Of the soul ?

THE PALACE OF PLEASURE.



I.

IN midst of gardens of gold fruit
An ample palace burned with gold,
Garnished and of a gracious mould,
But with an evil-tongued repute.
O'er it fantastic, manifold,
In plates of burnished silver sheathed,
Flashing abroad a far salute,
Up rose the fretted taper spires,
Whose silver chimes were never mute ;
And in the sumptuous chambers breathed,
And through the pillared galleries rolled
Rich savours of bruised cassia-root ;
The courts and closes rang with lyres
The pleasaunce with the flute.

*

II.

And round by reed-encinctured shores,
Upon the lotus-mantled lakes,
Threading green isles of scented brakes
Bright galleys swept with gilded oars ;
And breaking into pulpy flakes
The branches bowed with orange globes
Of rough rich rind and blood-red cores
That deepened to a purple hue
And burst with little golden spores ;
And all about in scarlet robes
The rush-flowers raised, like crested snakes,
Their tasselled plumes o'er mossy floors :
And round the almond-blossom flew
The humming-birds by scores.

III.

The great magnolias shed on air
The heavy perfume of a kiss ;
The white and purple clematis
Hung o'er the balustrade their fair
Rich tangles, and the vine-trellis

Groaned with the weight of clustered grapes ;
But sickly lilies, wan with care,
And smelling of love's fragrant prime,
Opened their bosoms pale and bare,
Whom with soft languorous bended shapes
The faint forgetful flowers of Dis
Bade barter grief for calm despair,
Which Sleep and Death, twin sons of Time,
Twist in the world-sick hair.

IV.

Within, on couches rare, inlaid
With rich mosaic blazonry
In sandal-wood and ivory,
Amid a rosy tinted shade,
And curtained with fair tapestry,
Bright girls lay panting with their dreams,
On whose globed eyes white eyelids weighed,
Transparent waxen lotus-leaves,
And on each black or amber braid
Of their curled hair, with doubtful gleams,
Like stars caught in a gauzy sky
'Mid trammelling clouds by storms affrayed,

(The meshes huntress Dian weaves),
The light of diamonds played.

V.

A flesh-coloured pale glory drowned
The cherubs on the painted roof ;
And, sea-green flowered with gold-shot woof,
The damask hangings whispered round ;
And from recesses more aloof
Soft viols aching with desire
Prolonged a sad delicious sound,
Voluptuous melancholy notes,
That round the soul like silence wound ;
And statues, at whose sight the fire
Of youth might blaze without reproof,
Stood with eyes bent upon the ground,
Goddesses with white breasts and throats,
Maidens with zone unbound.

VI.

It was a place where wandering men,
Sick of the shipwrecked hopes of life,
Weary of pride, and pain, and strife,
Might find a haven scorned till then ;
Forswearing joys of child and wife,

And glory, and the bays of song,
To sleep and never wake again ;
Leaving the mountain's beckoning snow
To wallow in the flowery glen ;
Leaving to memories of wrong
Love's fruitful fields with briars rise
For barren lust's trim flower-garden,
Content with sterile seed to sow
The unfurrowed fruitless fen.

VII.

Content that, all things being so,
At least one refuge yet remains,
One island 'mid life's arid plains,
Where lotus and the Upas grow,
Where men may draw through languorous veins,
The deep delicious frozen sleep,
That chills with a deceitful glow,
And checks with unrelaxing ice
The sluggish life-blood's ebb and flow ;
Content the corn-flower's wraith to keep
Amid the wreck of golden grains
Waste years in garners frail bestow ;
Content that fair forms yet entice,
When all the old loves go.

VIII.

There bards relaxed in affluent ease
Their lutes of fragile shell unslung,
And, leaned against the pillars, sung
Songs luscious as the fainting breeze
That swoons the peach-tree blooms among,
Delicious praise of love and wine,
That hung about the sculptured frieze,
Where youths and maidens dance about
The vintage-press with naked knees,
That echoed like the booming brine
On coral-girdled islands flung,
Or whispered like sand-kissing seas,
And sobbed with stray gusts in and out
The scented orange-trees.

IX.

Their voices ring from hall to hall,
And ravishing refrains repeat
The melancholy cadence sweet ;
As echoes when far voices call,
The listener from the hillside greet ;
Or as some murmuring stream runs on
From waterfall to waterfall ;

Or as, when soft-toned organs blow,
Long dome-wrapt echoes cloy and pall ;
And so shut out from air and sun,
Amid the aromatic heat,
They pass sweet days in willing thrall,
And round white shoulders careless flow
Their locks ambrosial.

X.


There on a throne voluptuous-wise,
In brow and temples like a queen,
But whose full parted lips between
Slips many a wave of ebbing sighs,
Lo Sappho, sorrowful-serene,
Triumphing o'er love's vanquished throes,
Like a young charioteer who flies
Swifter than sound, or light, or thought,
With face whereon no passion lies
To break its marble stern repose,
Holding in check the fiery teen
Of steeds that rush with frantic cries ;
And sweet Catullus there I caught
Kissing his Lesbia's eyes.

XI.

And Cupids fluttering drowsy plumes
Bear wine in chalices of pearl,
And let the golden smoke-wreaths curl
From censers charged with rich perfumes ;
And many a ministering girl
Welcomes with silver-sided bath
The new-come guest in marble rooms
Dripping and full of plashy sound,
And with uplifted lamp illumines
O'er Persian spoils his purple path,
Which others for his feet unfurl
The choicest work of Orient looms ;
And from a myriad dolphins round
The powdered water fumes.

XII.

And round about their sisters white
Pour scented torrents over him ;
And with their taper fingers slim
And yielding waists that tempt delight,
Lure him across the marble brim ;
And stroke his golden curling head,
Or let their feet dip out of sight,



Seated themselves upon the brink.

He all the while stands pale with fright,
Or burning to an angry red,

Feeling the air grow faint and dim
Where spray and incense fumes unite,
Then opes his rosy mouth to drink,
And spreads his arms like wings for flight.

XIII.

Alas ! no more from such close charms
Shall he return, the strong, the fleet ;
The race-course shall forget his feet,
The tawny stream forget his arms ;
And he shall shun the olive's sweet
More than the poison of the snake ;
And dread the trumpet's loud alarms
More than the deadlier woman's voice,
And less the kiss that slowly warms
With fires no seas shall ever slake,
Than the flame's quick devouring heat
That spares the soul the body harms ;
Yet not all evil deems the choice
Of one whom Venus thus disarms.

CUPID AND PSYCHE.



. . . ὃ δὴ τὸ αἰσχροὺν προσθήκει τοῦ ἄλλοτρίου προσῆλθε καὶ ἔργον αὐτῷ εἶπερ ἔσται πάλιν καλὸς, ἀποσιφαιμένος καὶ καθαρά-
 μένος ὅπερ ἦν εἶναι . αἰσχροὺν δὴ ψυχὴν λέγοντες ρίξει καὶ κρέσει
 καὶ νεύσει τῇ πρὸς τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἔλκην ὁρθῶς ἂν λέγοιμεν.—PLOT-
 INUS i. 5.

I FOUND a fallen rose-bud
 Where the mire lay gross and crass,
 One sweet Milesian story
 In the filthy Golden Ass ;
 And I thought as I lay dreaming
 And turned the pages o'er,
 That the Shade of Apuleius called
 To me from death's dim shore.

"My soul is fallen, fallen,
 From the Star-land of its birth ;
 It has learned the earthly passions,
 And mixed itself with earth.

It must seek the Heavenly Venus,
And rest re-reconciled
By Philosophy, too high for a man,
Too low for a little child.

“I have lived in the golden palace
Littered with shining gems,
The collars and the bracelets,
And the priceless diadems :
I knew the nuptial kisses
Of divine ethereal love ;
But once I gazed on Love in the light,
And he fled like a frightened dove.

“He left the aspirations,
The yearning endless pain,
But he himself was vanished
Ne’er to return again.
Then I wrought the three great labours,
And I reached the heavenly goal,
For I drowned vain love in toil for man
A crowned Olympian soul.”

CLEOBIS AND BITO.

TWO pious sons of undegenerate Greece,
When to the temple went the country folk
(The oxen were afield), bowed to the yoke,
And drew their mother forty stades with ease.

The people praised, the mother called down
peace

On sons that honoured her, and, at a stroke,
The goddess, hearing, ere the twain awoke
Now sleeping in the temple, gave release.

Mother, thy prayer is answered, and they rest :
The boon is better than thy best belief ;
Nor deem the oft-too-literal gods to blame !

Sleep, happy pair, of Heaven supremely blest,
Snatched in full health and joy from age and
grief,
Renown and virtue from reverse and shame !



A READING OF HORACE.

FRESH from the bath, with fair and polished
limbs,
Clothed in white cashmere flowered with silver silk,
Gold flagons by him on the tortoise-shell,
Sat the young Præfect of Praetorians
Among his statues, reading from a scroll.

“Sweet is it for the father-land to die,
And glorious”—He smiled a little smile,
And fanned himself with the white ostrich-plumes.

Then with a little start he came on this,
“Jove, we believe, reigns thundering in Heaven,”—
The same slight smile but wearier than before,
“Augustus shall be held a present god”—
Change but the name, thought he, and that might
stand,

At least I think the emperor exists,
And I may some day be the emperor.

Then rolling up the slack, he raised his look,
And seemed to hear the clarions round him blow—
“Let the strong youth in the harsh school of war
Learn to bear kindly narrow poverty”—
Good counsel for the wretch in need thereof,
Quoth he, and let the parchment coil run out
Between his fingers on the marble floor,
Among the scattered roses at his feet.

He read, “Maecenas, take a hundred cups,”
And further down, “forgetful to inquire
If any where the people suffer ill
Too carefully amid thy private joys.”
This pleased him, and just then a curtain’d screen
Parted, and forth there stole on tip-toe light,
With cautious playful paces panther-like,
A ruddy, ripe-lipped, and full-bosomed maid :
And o’er his shoulder stooping suddenly,
Kissed him, and kissed him, bird-like, once or
twice.
The scroll fell down, and curled up on the floor.

“ Ah Horace, Horace, thou sly hypocrite,
Which of the two strains shall we deem sincere ? ”

“ Both, narrow fool ; though thou must take thy
choice,
My soul and Cæsar’s could find room for both.”



SONNET.

OPE, starry mystery of the eternal skies !
To-night I walk the verges of the grave :
The shallow things that charm life and enslave
Fall off: the gaunt world stands without disguise.

Ope, starry mystery, to the world-sick eyes :
Unfold, thou aching void, to thoughts that
crave
The secret of thy secret, though I rave.
Better to rave than live in sick surmise.

The moon, and all the stars about the pole,
Swim round me, and I travel in dull pain,
A dumb Want in the solitude of Time.

What means it all? Whence comes, and to what
goal?

Whence, what am I whose life seems all in
vain?—

Earth, sea, and sky stand silent and sublime.



